Small panels for lower ranges.

An Interdisciplinary Approach to Contemporary Portuguese Comics and Trauma.

Pedro David Vieira de Moura

Image of the cover: Marco Mendes, "Fontinha," originally published in *Buraco* no. 4 (2012)

This dissertation was carried out while I was a recipient of a PhD scholarship from the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia

FCT Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia
MINISTÉRIO DA CIÊNCIA, TECNOLOGIA E ENSINO SUPERIOR

Declaração

Nome: Pedro David Vieira de Moura

Correio electrónico: pedrovmoura@gmail.com

Telefone: 912112553

Número do Bilhete de Identidade: 10101542

Doutoramento

Título dissertação: *Small panels for lower ranges. An Interdisciplinary Approach to Contemporary Portuguese Comics and Trauma*

Orientador(es): Professores Fernanda Gil Costa (FLUL) e Jan Baetens (Faculteit Letteren-KUL)

Ano de conclusão (defesa da tese): 2017

Faculdade /Instituto: Faculdade de Letras, Universidade de Lisboa e Faculteit Letteren, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven

Designação do Mestrado ou do Ramo de Conhecimento do Doutoramento: Estudos de Literatura e Cultura, na especialidade de Estudos Comparatistas

Declaro sob compromisso de honra que a tese/dissertação agora entregue corresponde à versão final apresentada ao júri. Declaro que concedo à Universidade de Lisboa e aos seus agentes uma licença não-exclusiva para arquivar e tornar acessível, nomeadamente através do seu repositório institucional, nas condições abaixo indicadas, a minha tese ou dissertação, no todo ou em parte, em suporte digital.

Declaro que autorizo a Universidade de Lisboa a arquivar e, sem alterar o conteúdo, converter a tese ou dissertação entregue, para qualquer formato de ficheiro, meio ou suporte, nomeadamente através da sua digitalização, para efeitos de preservação e acesso.

Concordo que a minha tese ou dissertação seja colocada no Repositório da Universidade de Lisboa com o seguinte estatuto

Disponibilização imediata do conjunto do trabalho para acesso mundial;

Retenho todos os direitos de autor relativos à tese ou dissertação, e o direito de a usar em trabalhos futuros.

Lisboa, 3 de Março de 2017

Assinatura:

Acknowledgments.

A 4-year plus project could not be completed without the support and sometimes sacrifice of others. This project was no exception in demanding from people around me patience, abnegation and a disinterested helping hand.

My first thanks go, with unending admiration, to my two co-advisors, Professora Fernanda Gil Costa and Professor Jan Baetens, who have gone way beyond the call of duty and human levels of patience to put up with my project. Their guidance and careful readings and lessons have been invaluable, and go beyond the dissertation project. Undoubtedly, faults remain. They are but my own.

I would like to thank the artists that I have mentioned and studied, many of which have helped in providing with some information, high resolution images or sending me additional material.

People whom I've come across during this path have been paramount in stimulating me to try aiming for the best I can do. The Comic Studies community is incredibly altruistic with their time and knowledge.

Some of the information I have used on the contemporary state of comics in Portugal was provisioned liberally by Nuno Pereira de Sousa, Marcos Farrajota, and Mário Freitas.

Just talking in person to Pascal Lefèvre, Gert Meesters, Maaheen Ahmed, Simon Grennan and Conceição Pereira has always been an eye-opener and a lesson in itself.

Throughout my little career within the world of comics, I have met many of the people that I've admired for years, and I am continually baffled for their incredible kindness and humbleness when sharing their thoughts with an overtly anxious person such as myself. I will always be in debt to Geraldes Lino, Domingos Isabelinho, Professor David Kunzle and Professor Ann Miller.

The time I've spent in Leuven was not only fruitful in terms of academic work, but also in other dimensions. Sharing an office with Júlio Landim was engaging and resulted in great talks, as well as outstanding food experiences.

There are not enough words to express the gratitude I have for the Peeters family. While I was in Leuven and Kessel-Lo, they opened their doors to a complete stranger who happened to study comics. This was not only an incredible act of kindness, but also the providing of an marvellous soothing and fun environment for the awkwardness of staying, for a while, away from home. To discover, in fact, a second home. For the ceiling, great talks and wine, and for helping me cross and say "Bondgenotenlaan," a big *dankjewel* to Patrick, Chris, Charlotte and Beetle.

Benoît Crucifix was paramount in many moments. I am very fortunate for counting him as an academic confidante and a friend. An attentive reader and critic, an incredibly talented and intelligent *compagnon de route*, I am indebted to him for many shared readings, second opinions and calls to Earth. *Merci à toi*.

I would also like to thank Professora Ângela Fernandes for her helping guidance in the last leg of the path.

Of course, for keeping up with me for life, Yunseon, Juno and Ari. Somehow, this is for you.

Abstracts.

Small Panels for Lower Ranges aims to integrate a choice of contemporary independent Portuguese comics into the ongoing international dialogue of Comics Studies, an area that has grown exponentially in the last ten to twenty years, but still has many "blind spots" and does not always take into account the production of smaller cultural areas. This dissertation is also part of the particular interdisciplinary field brought forth by Trauma Studies, the culturally-inflected psychoanalytical analysis of narratives (or non-narratives) that express traumatic experiences. Apart from contextualizing the very state of Trauma Studies, this dissertation attempts a cultural history of modern comics in Portugal in order to better understand how the contemporary production differs from earlier, historical examples, authors after 1974 are able to question more thoroughly the present socio-economic conditions in which they emerge. Somewhat typical of the Portuguese works I address is the focus on "small traumas" and my analysis of the latter will broaden our understanding of traumatogenic conditions (following lessons by Laura S. Brown) and, consequently, emphasise a comprehensive notion of empathy. While woks of art imbued within a political struggle, these comics contribute to "different modes of inhabitation," in Jill Bennett's expression. Therefore, it may show how the study of comics may also give back to Trauma Studies.

Small Panels for Lower Ranges (*Pequenos Traumas nos Quadradinhos*) tem como fito principal a integração de uma selecção da banda desenhada contemporânea portuguesa independente no diálogo internacional, em curso, na área conhecida como Estudos de Banda Desenhada. Este é um território que tem crescido exponencialmente nas últimas décadas, mas que continua a manter muitos "pontos cegos," e nem sempre presta a atenção devida à produção de áreas culturais periféricas. Esta dissertação faz parte igualmente do campo particularmente interdisciplinar que foi tornado possível pelos Estudos do Trauma, a análise psicanalítica e inflectida pelos Estudos Culturais de narrativas (ou não-narrativas) que expressam a experiência traumática. Para além de contextualizar o estado da arte dos Estudos do Trauma, esta dissertação tentará delinear uma história cultural da banda desenhada moderna em Portugal, de forma a compreender melhor como é que a produção contemporânea se diferencia de exemplos históricos, uma vez que se tornou possível aos autores contemporâneos (pós-1974) questionarem de formas mais sustentadas as condições sócio-económicas das quais emergem. Até certo ponto comum nos trabalhos portugueses que analisarei encontra-se o foco nos "pequenos traumas" e o meu estudo destes alargará a nossa compreensão das condições traumatogénicas (seguindo lições de Laura S. Brown) e, consequentemente, enfatizará uma noção mais abrangente de empatia. Enquanto obras de arte integradas num esforço político, esta produção de banda desenhada contribui para "modos diferentes de habitação," na expressão de Jill Bennett. Desta forma, poderá também demonstrar-se como o estudo da banda desenhada pode retribuir o gesto de contribuição para os Estudos do Trauma.

Contents.

List of images.

(note: these extra pages are to be found *after* corresponding regular number of pages; in the digital version, images will be found in a separate pdf file plus individual jpegs).

Introduction.

"There is no quotidian life
in contemporary societies of control
that does not presupposes a form of microterror"
José Gil

The present dissertation has, first and foremost, a theoretical-conceptual interest on Trauma Theory. By engaging it through the subject of comics, it hopes to inquire about its limitations and the possibility of entering in a dialogue with fairly understudied objects. As an inflecting focus, the dissertation will ground itself in a specific national context, namely, the particularly contemporary, independent Portuguese comics circle, from a production and publication point of view. It is not my goal to study its reception, which would warrant a different groundwork. I hope that by addressing each of these objects – Trauma Studies, Comics Studies and the specific corpus of this dissertation – we can better understand them. Ultimately, by looking at a different type of comics production, which is under-analysed in my view, I may contribute to the expansion of its understanding and its political agency.

I could sum up the work that follows in the form of a few questions. First if all, what can we draw from Trauma Studies, as it has been used to think about literature, cinema and visual arts, in order to consider comics productions? At the time of development of this dissertation, recent trauma theory has invested significantly in the comics field (e.g., Refaie 2013, Chute 2016). I hope to contribute further to that effort. Second, how can the consideration of comics and Comics Studies contribute to a different understanding of Trauma Studies? The two following questions narrow the case studies but also help us consolidating my goals. What happens when instead of considering "big traumas" we look into "small traumas"? And lastly, how does looking at one specific national context helps us in pursuing such a goal and think about wider different contexts?

The first chapter will discuss exclusively Trauma Theory and expound what I want to call "small traumas." For this, I will follow a number of theoreticians who have developed a critique of earlier instances of Trauma Theory (Caruth 1995 and 1996) through the lenses of feminism and post-colonial studies (Hartman 1995, Tal 1996, Radstone 2005 and 2007, Ball 2007, Craps 2013). What these critiques have managed to do is shift the attention of

the kinds of subjects and situations that are considerable as amenable to trauma, preventing one from creating hierarchies between traumas but also beware of conflating different political and social realities. Whereas this aspect is not related to comics themselves, I believe this to be a medium that presents many instances of subjects and situations closer to the dimensions discussed by those same criticisms. Moreover, such critiques alter the very nature (and even the notions) of the relationship between "event" and "subject," "external" and "internal agency," and so on. As Pheng Cheah puts it,

> "We should therefore understand trauma as a form of radical heteronomy where the trace or mnemic residue of something that originates from outside the subject (the accident or physical injury) takes shape within the very inside of the subject as an alterity or otherness, as alien power that undermines its self-control" (2008: 193)

More often than not, and unsurprisingly, this area is filled with controversies, vexed questions, problematic expansions and inclusions and sometimes incompatible positions. My contribution here will be less about Trauma Theory itself, than trying to understand how the tools that have been developed within it can be thought in relation to often overlooked realities and experiences, and how that may enrich one's consideration about the pervasiveness of traumatogenic conditions. I would like to make mine Luckhurst's words when he writes, "[r]ather than offer another invested polemic, I propose we need to begin by unravelling the complex elements that have been knotted into the notion of trauma" (Luckhurst 2008: 15). One cannot fall into the error of thinking that we are already familiar with "which events, experiences and texts are to be classed as traumatic and which are to be excluded from this category" (Radstone 2007: 24). We cannot turn "trauma" into a predetermined category with necessary and sufficient conditions, that we would try to identify so that we would then apply or deny them in relation to a given situation. We cannot create a hierarchy of comparisons or degrees of entitlement to trauma, or worse yet, stack one trauma (one kind, one nature, one history) against another. As Susannah Radstone, a linchpin for the present dissertation, puts it clearly, trauma theory needs "to act as a check against, rather than a vehicle of the Manichean tendencies currently dominant within western politics and culture" (2007: 26). As any other "textual figuration," comics may thus provide the reader with "an experience that parallels (without being equivalent to)" (Walker 2005: 110) that of the characters. In other words, they provide us with a vicarious experience that when considered, read, sensed, no matter how "little" the traumas addressed may be, will help us in seeking ways of being empathetically open to other people's experience so that we may, in turn, according to Ann Kaplan, "generate beneficial

empathy for the sufferings of peoples far removed from one's own communities" (2005: 88).

This does not mean that readers will *identify* themselves with the other. Being an art form, comics "expands the sympathetic imagination while teaching us about the limits of sympathy" (apud Bennett 2005: 9). Such limits are assured by that which Dominick LaCapra calls *empathic unsettlement*, a term he uses "to describe the aesthetic experience of simultaneously *feeling for* another and becoming aware of a distinction between one's own perceptions and the experience of the other" (Bennett 2005: 8). Moreover, by looking at apparently less than overwhelming situations, sometimes even banal ones, we may uncover a disturbing silence and invisibility that is bestowed upon them and prevents us from considering them at all.

There are a number of events that appear often treated in the comics medium with more or less repeated formulas and structures that trigger immediate attention to the detriment of other subjects, speakers and events. *Prêt-a-porter* "themes," as it were, that lead to "numbing effects of repeated exposure to mediated traumatic material and the aesthetics of shock" (Luckhurst 2008: 89). With the notion of "small traumas," we are shifting the attention, not with the intention of reducing certain events or experiences to unimportant positions, and even less so to debase them, but to simply pay attention to pervasive problems in (in this case) Portuguese society as they are exposed, discussed, negotiated in the comics medium. If some authors may point out that using trauma in such a way, in the absence of so-called "real" trauma, is nothing but the expression of a generation deep in a crisis of form and language, or worst, bad faith and fetishism (Giglioli 2011), we can also look at it in a more positive light. Not by creating hierarchies of the right to speak about or address trauma, but rather understand the reasons for the "pervasiveness of trauma but also the reiteration of traumatic subjectivity in different kinds of register" (Luckhurst 2008: 15), especially when dealing with a medium so much associated with popular culture. Instead of looking for the overwhelming, dramatic and spectacular "event" that would constitute the traumatic subject, one should be attentive to ongoing, daily conditions, "a continuing background noise rather than an unusual event" (Brown 1995: 102-103) that undermine the seemingly untraumatized subjects into actors who may address trauma in their work.

As Paul Antze and Michal Lambek write in their preface to *Tense Past*: "[t]oday's fragmented subjects are not unrelated to the complexities of transnational links, cultural

pluralism, and the weakening of the state" (1996: xxii). Facing those complexities, and thinking of them under the light of the small trauma, we see new subjectivities emerging within these texts, which help "narratively reconvene the self" (Luckhurst 2008: 119).

Luckhurst continues:

> "…the passage through trauma often works here not to undermine but rather to *guarantee* subjectivity" (…) [autobiography is] less and exercise in self-revelation than an act of coerced fashioning of selves" (2008: 119, 120).

As it should be clear, this dissertation is not discussing solely autobiography, and even less so the authors themselves, of course, but rather the texts. Although it is possible to address comics as an indexical medium, as is the case of Philippe Marion's graphiation theory, we will not follow that path. Comics are a mode of expression that goes through a number of necessary structuring processes, an active and conscious operation with materials, it employs methods that, by their sheer existence, are sign of activity. Comics are part and parcel of all modern human's artistic expressions. As such, they participate in the artefactuality and social agency of other disciplines. Comics not only may reflect the principles of a certain society as they may act upon them and propose alternative configurations. With Alfred Gell, we can consider them as "created objects," and therefore, "as agents as prompting a cognitive operation that implies agency – they are understood both as the outcome and as an instrument of social agency" (apud Feuchtwang 2003: 87).

As a historically and socially determined cultural and aesthetic production, comics are at one time guided by the strong personality and creativity of its individuated authors but also fully integrated in specific economic, technological and political conditions, which includes both the conditions of production and of reception. They are then as able to respond to the world as any other human endeavour. They contribute, either through imaginative fiction or critical assessment, to the discussion and rethinking of a given society's mores and politics. Moreover, and especially so, they provide very often storyworlds that may help one to imagine alternative spaces, identities and practices (Fawaz 2016). There is no such thing as a homogeneous body of comics. Comics are multiple, varied, come in many shapes, present a multitude of genres, styles and approaches. They may be entertaining and fun, but also politically demanding and intellectually engaging. Sometimes, they are all that at one time. In the absence of a singular concept uniting every single object someone has ever called comics, one should keep an open mind to the way

comics may respond to certain issues, including to the very conditions that may lead to traumatogenic situations in the contemporary world.

This may help us go beyond a certain canonicity. Quite often, and also in the discussion of comics in Trauma Studies-related texts, there seems to be an always already *corpora* of certain kinds of comics as objects of study, such as Spiegelman's *Maus* or *In The Shadow of No Towers*, Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* or Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*. The use of these examples over and over again seems to confirm a bias towards a certain class of comics in detriment of others. An example of this is Marianne Hirsch's discussion of Spiegelman's *In The Shadow of No Towers* (2004), which she considers as acting towards "an attempt to see beyond the [Lacanian-Silverman] given-to-be-seen and to say what cannot otherwise be said" (1215). To a certain extent, it seems that only comics that follow the tenet of the unrepresentability of trauma – that is to say, the impossibility of considering representative signs (drawings, texts, schemata) as able to transmit the experience they relate to the readers-spectators – are amenable to be addressed by the discourse of trauma. As I hope to show, by considering other sorts of productions and by shifting the focus of trauma theory, we can also expand the practice of democratizing political representation. Hillary Chute, in her most recent book, *Disaster Drawn*, discusses how comics are a powerful medium "precisely in how it intervenes against the trauma-driven discourse of the unrepresentable and the ineffable" (2016: 178).

As in any other type of work of art, the comics texts with which I will engage have to be interpreted within a sensible framework. One cannot read too little or too much into them. One is reminded of Umberto Eco's "limits of interpretation" (1994) in order to focus on what he calls "the intention of the text." "A text is a device conceived in order to produce its own Model Reader," he writes (1994: 58). The Model Reader may have multiple interpretations of the same text, but cannot base them on the purported intentions of the empirical author or on an ultimate agenda the reader may have. Everything must be grounded on the text itself. Therefore, I will not use author's interviews or personal knowledge about them except when necessary to explain working or publication conditions. And as mentioned before, I am not studying the reception of the texts.

Nevertheless, in order not to read too little, I do believe that a description of the circumstances in which the works appeared is needed. I will start then with a historical and social-economic contextualization of the texts as grounded as possible. When I read any given text I will be doing so in a specific circumstantial framework, using specific

instruments, approaches, methods that could be changed in another framework, or even another moment. Each chapter will deal with very different genres and formats. In an academic setting, with a interdisciplinary approach, the danger of impermanent readings is particularly strained. That is not, however, a weakness in the reading itself: it is an intrinsic part of it. As J. Hillis Millers wrote

> "The poem, like all texts, is 'unreadable,' if by 'readable' one means open to a single, definitive, univocal interpretation. In fact, neither the 'obvious' reading nor the 'deconstructionist' reading is 'univocal.' Each contains, necessarily, its enemy within itself, is itself both host and parasite" (Miller 1977: 447).

On the other hand, can one read too much into a work of art? After all, there are always excesses of meaning that emerge from that which is not said, that which lies beyond what is given to be seen. It is precisely because there are so many "unsaids" that meaning becomes animated beyond what is present in the visibility of representation or plot. Here, I am following an idea by Laura U. Marks:

> "We may feel this sense of excess in conversation when we become aware that what we are saying has a sense that exceeds it (as in, the sense of 'Will you pass the salt?' is 'I'm leaving you'). Similarly, a work of art is rich in sense if it cannot be contained in a description" (Marks 2002: xv).

Hopefully, I will pursue the parasite within, the excessive mark that piles up on the meaning. As H. J. Miller continues, "the parasite is always already present within the host, the enemy always already within the house, the ring always an open chain" (Miller 1977: 446). This image of the ring is quite appropriate: the excesses of meaning are open always to temporary, non-univocal readings, revealing always new meanings (hidden, excessive) that would invite to new interpretive efforts, and so on.

Comics have a very specific way to deal with human experience, and engage the readers in very specific ways (Groensteen 1999; Kukkonen 2013), allowing for a multitude of treatments and cultural conversations (Miller 2007, Berninger et al. 2010). Despite the long history of attempts in serious discourses about comics (Huard 1998-1999, Miller-Beaty 2014, Jeet-Worcester 2009), the very recent emergence of an academically-integrated and disciplinary articulated area such as Comics Studies have brought about more attention and openness towards looking at comics as an available creative territory as any other. Nevertheless, I do not wish to create any sort of absolute hierarchy between this form of art and any other, in an attempt to present comics as a "better" or "more suited" form to

address trauma. Hillary Chute believes that "the cross-discursive form of comics is apt for expressing [the] difficult register [of trauma]" (2010: 2) and likewise Erin La Cour, although specifically discussing comics "life narratives," writes how

> "the graphic novel's modes of visual representation of the personal experience are distinctly able to comment on the discourse of truth and trauma in personal narrative in that they reveal how memory is negotiated by both sight and feeling" (2010: 46-47).

I do agree with both Chute and La Cour in these assessments but would add that the negotiation of memory does also take place in other types of comics, including fiction, fantasy and genre comics. More than creating predetermined hierarchies following genres, styles, formats or any other descriptor in order to decide which kinds of comics warrant critical attention or, worse, are able to address certain subjects, one should celebrate the medium itself for its artistic integrity, cultural relevance, and political agency, zeroing in on each text in particular in an attempt to understand *how* and *how far* such integrity, relevance and agency is achieved. But before addressing the *types of comics* I will use, a brief word about its national scope.

In contrast with more established centres of comics production, such as France-Belgium, the United States or Japan, Portugal is a slower, smaller and less surer market. One could even say that comics in Portugal, despite its long, rich and varied history, is "ephemeral," considering the lack of instruments that would uphold its history and memory. Famously, Groensteen described comics as "art without memory" (2006). But ever since, this description has been put to the test. First of all, the "central" comics hubs have been putting out numerous archival editions of historical material, sometimes even with what one could call critical apparatuses. Second, academic endeavours have grown massively (conferences, international colloquiums, graduate courses and syllabi, papers, specialized journals, etc.). And overall, comic's cultural traction has been undoubtedly cemented across many areas, from book clubs to film adaptations, art galleries and literary festivals.

But within Portugal it is precisely because comics are not a sure-fire industry that many artists work on them in more alternative venues. To be clear, there *are* more commercial, generic types of comics being produced in Portugal, but the scope of this dissertation will rather focus on small press, fanzines, and alternative takes on comics. Moreover, those are the types of comics that also try to address in a more direct, sometimes even confrontational manner, issues such as historical memory, the

pervasiveness of the democratic capitalism and economic liberalism ideologies, thus associating themselves to the "small traumas" that emerge within this kind of societies.

The second chapter, therefore, creates both a historical and a social-economic context for comics production within contemporary Portugal.

The following three chapters will present the close readings of the case studies I have selected, and which are very different in nature from one another. Chapters three and four use the work of singular artists, even if working in collaboration. Marco Mendes, the subject of chapter three, creates mostly autobiographical comics, but quite often integrating fantasy and absurd or surreal scenes in his work. A poet of a stark and melancholy quotidian, Mendes creates short stories – all subsumed to an ongoing project called *Diário Rasgado* - that act as a reflecting mirror of a whole generation's feeling that the political and economic situation in Portugal is stale. A crisis that does not lead to fervid responses but rather to a dispassionate inability to react, and the expression of what Sianne Ngai calls "ugly feelings" (2005).

Given the proximity to autobiographical comics, Mendes's work would be the closest to the usual objects that are dealt with when discussing trauma and comics, even though the creative way *Diário Rasgado* enmeshes memory with fantasy brings it closer still to that which Janet Walker calls the "traumatic paradox." Walker (2005) explains:

> "while a traumatic experience can produce either veracious memories or a trail of symptoms connecting an event with its psychic manifestation, it can also, especially when repeated over time, as in the case of incest, trigger fantasies, repression, misperceptions, and interpretations created by the real events but not realistically representative of them" (7)

Whereas *Diário Rasgado* does not involve such overwhelming situations such as incest or the Holocaust (Walker's subjects in relation to cinema), it nevertheless follows memory's "inherent vicissitudes" (Walker 2006: 107), making it, in Hayden White's phrase, "unrepresentable *in the realist mode*" (apud Walker 2005: 21, emphasis in the original).

Miguel Rocha, the key author of chapter four, with a solo work (*As pombinhas do Senhor Leitão*) and a collaborative project (*Salazar*), brings about another dimension. The first book is a fictional account set in 1920-30's Portugal and the second one a more or less distorted biography of Portugal's dictator António de Oliveira Salazar. In both cases, we have comics that deal with history, contributing to, according to Karin Kukkonen, "popular cultural memory," in which

> "three dimensions of culture come together: the social dimension of the audience as its carriers, the material dimension of media texts and the mental dimension of codes and convention that facilitate the reading process" (2008: 261-262).

These books not only act out, as it were, these historical landscapes, as they also force one to rethink one's attitude towards history, and many of the fantasies we may have with "what if?" scenarios. By re-creating quotidian stories with either historical negligible characters (the mute young woman of *Pombinhas*) or central actors of historical forces (Salazar himself), one poses the question, "what would I do if I was in such and such a situation?" but ultimately is denied any agency over the events. This forces one to consider history as something that is both set and fluid, or better still, that has to be negotiated in an individual scale, instead of predetermined roles and "right" attitudes. As Fritz Breithaupt discusses in an article about the origins of the notion of trauma,

> "the starting point of pedagogy and psychology alike is that the past shapes the identity of an individual. However, what psychology adds to pedagogy is that the past shaping of the individual can be reversed by certain acts of recollection. (…) The self as such is the product of the operation of the psychological, the correction of memory, the archival act"(Breithaupt 2005: 93).

Comics, when working against the grain of historical discourses, by creating fictive layers on top of historical factors or realities, offer its readers with a new archive with which to reconsider one's role in relation to the past and with new empathy tools with which to understand, but not solving, traumatic situations. As Stephan Feuchtwang writes

> "A reader brings to a book empathy, with the named subject of the book or with the creative skill and imagination of the author; both are mobilized in the play of recognition" (Feuchtwang 2003: 81).

Therefore, it is paramount that one does not buy into a facile notion of character identification, such as the one proposed by Scott McCloud (1993), and followed unquestionably by so many authors. So-called character identification is in fact a dangerous way of bypassing empathy, as explored by Dominick LaCapra:

> "Objectivity requires *checks and resistances to full identification*, and this is one important function of meticulous research, contextualization, and the attempt to be as attentive as possible to the voices of others whose alterity is recognized. Empathy in this sense is a form of virtual, not vicarious, experience related to what Kaja Silverman has termed *heteropathic identification*, in which emotional response comes with respect for the

other and the realization that the experience of the other is not one's own" (2011: 40; my italics).

Heteropathic identification is describable as "a form of encounter predicated on an openness to a mode of existence or experience beyond what is known by the self" (Bennett 2005: 9). Therefore, there is never confusion between the reader and the character's experience (whether fictional or autobiographical, but especially when referring to a sufferer or victim character), and this is the caveat which should prevent us from abuses of psychoanalytical readings of works of art as paths towards their author's lives. Even accepting the "radical insight of psychoanalysis" of an "otherness within" (Radstone and Hodgkin 2003: 91), one must bear in mind that "the goal of recounting the trauma story is integration, not exorcism" (Judith Lewis Herman, apud Leys 1996: 123). In any case, this is one of the reasons why one must underline at all times that one is analysing works of art and not people, lest we fall into categorical mistakes and interpretive abuse (Baetens 2001: 153 and ff.).

The fact that we will be dealing with a certain class of comics has to do both with the chosen national context and time frame, but it stems also from the very quality of comics being produced in Portugal. This does not mean, however, that I am unaware of the possibilities of engaging with other sorts of comics under the same theoretical frameworks.

For instance, Martyn Pedler goes as far as, when discussing North American monthly comics books, especially of the super-hero variety, with their repetitive cliffhangers and endless crises, finding in them a perfect ground for the exploration of trauma. "When this monthly doom meets the blueprint or repetition and excess," he writes, "it makes ongoing trauma into a structural necessity" (n.d.: 3). Pedler's discussion about the way that contemporary readers and fans have access to any character's full backstory (via trade paperbacks of entire runs, online wikis, and so on) is quite riveting and changes radically considerations on the seriality of Superman or James Bond-type narratives, that still follow some of Umberto Eco's famous essay. Pedler considers that this "hyperconsciousness" or "mass-memory transforms the nature of the ongoing superhero narrative" (Idem: 6). In Mendes' case, which is a serialised comic to a certain extent, we could see some of the possibilities of this "structural necessity" in trauma, but the nature of the narratives is very, very different, and the traumas that are dealt with are, once again, less overwhelming and spectacular.

That is why the last chapter will deal with a very different class of comics works. On the one hand, I want to include comics works that have not been published in more traditional book formats but rather have appeared in as diverse vehicles as anthologies, fanzines, one-shot booklets or even as art-objects. And on the other hand, I want to consider work that may be considered experimental. I believe that there is a strong heuristic value of studying such objects within this context, and which will help expanding the kinds of material one may consider when thinking about trauma-themed comics.

One of Trauma Theory tenets is the compulsion to repetition. In her decisive introduction to *Trauma, Explorations in Memory*, Caruth explains how trauma

> "is not typified by the event itself - which may or may not be catastrophic, and may not traumatize everyone equally - not can it be defined in terms of a distortion of the event, achieving its haunting power as result of *distorting* personal significances attached to it. The pathology consists, rather, solely in *the structure of its experience* or reception: the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repressed *possession* of the one who experiences it. To be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event" (1995: 4)

That image or event which possess the traumatized person haunts him or her, by re-appearing repeatedly in an unsolved enigma. One could call them gaps or intervals in an ongoing narrative.

If we go back to considering the very structures of comics, we can understand how often writers may look at the intervals between the panels (usually called "gutters") as something that allows making visible the very own gaps of memory, the forgetfulness involved in remembering, and how they underline "the subjectivity of personal experience and the disjointedness of memory" (La Cour 2010: 47). In this sense, La Cour is following Scott McCloud, Hilary Chute and others in her equation of panels and time (calling them "boxes of time" inclusively). But I feel that this is a reification of the gutters beyond their arthological role (Groensteen 1999). To equate the apparently fragmentary nature of comics with a "never fully-remembered story" seems to reinforce the idea that comics are best suited for the impossibility of reinstating a full-fledged narrative than any other medium. But I believe one could look at the fragmentary nature of comics, that is to say, the visible integration of the intervals in the very visual matter of its telling, as a "force of repetition," to employ an expression by Judith Butler, so that, instead of being a source only of "a destructive repetititon compulsion" brought about by trauma it can be seen also

as "the very condition of an affirmative response" to that same trauma (Butler 1993: 83-84). Instead of considering the intervals as gaps that would stand for the unrepresentability of the event and of the experience, which is the keystone of Trauma Theory, one can consider it as the actual space of negotiation and suture that come about with the very act of re-telling, re-creating, re-addressing that same experience. Fritz Breithaupt goes even farther when he considers "repetition as the place where the self becomes itself" (Breithaupt 2005: 96).

But trauma may arise, within comics, not in the gaps, but the visible panels. In *Désoeuvré* (2005), the French author Lewis Trondheim produces a complex essay about comics creation. Told in the first person and drawing from conversations and the experiences of a multitude of other artists, Trondheim aims to understand "le problème du viellissement de l'auteur de bande dessinée," creating a rather bleak sociological cross-section of the medium (at least, within France), but at the same time proposing new aesthetic and political paths for comics, such as this very interrogative gesture. Through the examples of Moebius, Fred, Franquin, Tibet, Gotlib and some of his L'Association colleagues, Trondheim tackles with issues such as depression, lack of will, numbness and the sheer pain that overwhelms many artists due to the fact that they have to draw the same things over and over again, panel after panel, following the same page composition, the same narrative structures, the series principle, and so on. It is the repetition of the same, not the gaps, that brings about traumatic consequences. It is repetition of the self that destroys the self, to re-use Breithaupt's sentence.

The fact that it is the medium of comics that acts in such a way, and not solely one type of its production, the final chapter will amass as its particular corpus a number of comics that fall without the purvey of either the "graphic novel" phenomenon or mainstream serialized forms. This has to do not only with the fact that comics production in Portugal follows quite different models and possibilities, as it is an attempt as well to contribute to a widening of the attention to many sorts of comics in Comics Studies, without contributing acritically to a quite-often unchallenged canon (of works, authors, genres, styles, but also languages, nationalities, economic prowess, and so on). In fact, I will not engage in a undisputed distinction between *graphic novels* and *comics* that could, arguably, be debated on the basis of social or business-commercial terms, for instances, or some narrow formal differentiation, or perhaps length-wise considerations about purported oppositions between "seriousness," "gravitas" and "levity" (see Baetens 2010).

Chapter five, then, will discuss a number of short stories found on anthologies, fanzine material, and even experimental comics. For this, I will engage with the notion of "minority" as discussed by Deleuze and Guattari in *Kafka* (2003), in order to understand the different expressive and political paths followed by these works in relation to the previous authors in their books. The political dimension of this sort of production, as it relates to the very democratization or critique of Trauma Theory, will gain a new inflection thanks to a dialogue with Jacques Rancière's particular notion of "politics" (2004 and 2010).

One comes across many texts, either journalistic or academic, speaking about the "possibilities" of comics to delve into a number of content matters, stylistic approaches and its use within disciplinary, cultural, aesthetic and political contexts. But the truth is that after more than century and a half of production in dozens of full-fledged, more or less independent traditions, those possibilities are not virtual but actual. If this dissertation casts a constricted net where space and time are concerned – contemporary Portugal -, it does aim at a wider consideration of form and expressive approaches. And by interrogating that production under the tools and conceptual frameworks afforded by Trauma Studies, assisted by many other disciplinary sources, it may identify fashions of identifying, negotiating, dialogueuing and perhaps even responding critically and overcoming those "traumatogenic effects of oppression that are not necessarily overtly violent or threatening to bodily well-being at the given moment but that do violence to the soul and spirit" (Brown 1997: 107).

And if the structure of this dissertation seems to advance by short bursts of theoretical contextualization, then go back to historical background and conditions of production, finally to close readings of specific texts, and then back again at theoretical or contextual dimensions, that happens precisely in such a way that mimics the lack of order of the opening questions. Or the circular relationship between how comics may helps us understand better certain conditions and responses to trauma and how traumatogenic situations and consequences may be expressed by comics. But this should come as no surprise, as after all, as Roger Luckhurst puts it,

> "No narrative of trauma can be told in a linear way: it has a time signature that must fracture conventional causality" (Luckhurst, 2008: 9).

Chapter One.

A Short History of Trauma.

> "...trauma has become such an abiding concern also in the humanities as to necessitate the development of a new paradigm."

So writes Thomas Elsaesser (2001: 195).

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the ever-changing features of such a paradigm. Throughout this dissertation, I will be addressing works of art - comics texts - with tools that stem from criticism, and not the actual people, the authors, the artists, with clinical, medical tools. One must be attentive to the kinds of methodology and tools that are used, but also to the scope accessible to those very same tools and the important limits they have.

The use of Trauma Studies in order to read a number of comics texts aims to reach and underline their political, social and ethical implications. It is less important for me to reveal the authors' purportedly inner mental world (the province of a certain style of psychoanalytical and biographist work that I have no interest in), than to understand their diagnosis of the world as performed through the comics medium. "We do not write with our neuroses (…) [literature is] an enterprise of health" (Deleuze 1997: 3).

To make this as clear as possible: I have no intention of proposing a new definition of trauma, but I do want to understand how is it that the cultural, political disciplinary discourses that have been associated to Trauma Studies can help one to analyse how certain authors create works that seem to respond to situations of social and financial inequality, a certain feeling of insecurity and violence, and historical forgetfulness. In the case, works of comics. More often than not, when people think of trauma and comics (or any other medium for that matter) they will think of the traumatic events such as the Holocaust (like in *Maus*, or *We are on our own*, by Miriam Katin), 9/11 (Spiegelman's *In the Shadow of No Towers*, Alissa Torres's and Sungyoon Choi's *American Widow*), incest or sexual abuse (Debbie Dreschler's *Daddy's Girl*, Phoebe Gloeckner's and Lynda Barry's oeuvre, etc.), disease (Harvey Pekar and Joyce Brabner's *Our Cancer Year*, David B's *L'ascension du haut mal/Epileptic*, Frederick Peeter's *Les pilules bleues*), or as an engagement with historical frameworks (from Satrapi's *Persepolis* to Peter Pontiac's *Kraut* and Antonio

Altarriba's and Kim's *El arte de volar*). In many ways perpetuating thus a certain comics canonicity of what merits scholarly attention and what stays beyond such a threshold.

By no means am I arguing that this is wrong in itself, or that these works are unimportant in any way. But it begs the question why they warrant so much attention in detriment to other texts, other chronicles, other cultures and nationalities, etc.? And, more importantly, if by doing so that focus perpetuates any prejudices and lacks of balance?

Enmeshed with that query, I also want to ask how, besides these overwhelming traumas, do comics respond to *pervasive* or *insidious* trauma, "micro-aggressions"? How do they work with "small traumas," everyday affects that hinder people's daily lives, their prospects for the future, even the very possibility of thinking about a future or a self?

A few years ago, I participated in an academic meeting, and one of the panels was dedicated to history, memory and trauma. After the presentations, one of which focused on the autobiographical work of Carol Tyler, Miriam Katin and Alissa Torres, one of the participants bemoaned to the presenter the fact that, in her view, "trauma" was becoming an "umbrella term." In this person's view, "trauma" should be a protected term, and used exclusively as regarding a certain class of events and psychological and emotional impacts on people, and not be used willy-nilly in relation to whatever difficulties one would think individually of as traumatic. Now, as of course, without further information and contextualization about this intervention, this becomes a rather straw man argument. I understand that. But the fact is that whenever the words "trauma" and "comics" come together, more often than not the events brought to the fore belong to a certain expected typology within such a conservative view of the word.

The problem is that trauma has been an umbrella term since its inception in the late 19th century, and throughout its history, as it made its way from a medical-psychological framework to a literary studies-inflected discourse to popular usage.

Trauma began as a term applied to *woundedness* (in fact, its etymological Greek root means "wound"), the result of a physical blow to the body, but with the work of Jean Martin Charcot, Pierre Janet, Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud, a more comprehensive approach would include the psychological consequences of the traumatic event. Charcot's work on hysterical women was but the first step into the inquiry of the intersection of trauma-as-event, psychological disturbances and personality development. Roger Luckhurst presents an outline of the "psychodynamic theory [of the mind]" (2008: 38 and ff.), which

would play a crucial role in the development and expansion of the usage of the term trauma. It was never "a 'matter of fact,' as [Bruno] Latour puts it, but a 'matter of concern,' an enigmatic thing that prompts perplexity, debate and contested opinion" (33). Even within Freud's work, trauma went through a number of changes. His treatment of the condition of hysteria, for instance, moved from the body to a trauma- and anxiety-based causality, and its psychologization. Freud "was modifying a category already in semantic flux" (Bettina Bergo, 2007: 6-7). It went back and forth in between internal and external excitations of trauma, founding its aetiology on his early "sexual seduction" theory, later disavowed in order to focus on internal causes. With World War I, a "mechanized factory of death" and source of "mass trauma" (Luckhurst: 51), Freud's observations of "shell shocked" soldiers, would make him return once again to external explanations (see also Janet Walker, 2006: 119).[1]

In addition, Abram Kardiner made important contributions to the study of trauma within the war environment with 1914-1918 U.S. veterans, and, of course, Sandor Ferenczi's insights (and the discussions with Freud) were crucial in this growth. Moreover, a more mature Freud would bring together his interests in trauma, but also history, culture, art and literature. Significantly, Freud does not posit an all-powerful role to his own discipline when facing literature. "Before the problem of the creative artist analysis must, alas, lay down its arms" (Rey 1982: 304).

But even these first expansions, as it were, were not devoid of obstacles, as they were not devoid of ideological strife, engaging with gender, race and social class.

Quoting Herbert W. Page, from his 1883 essay, *Injuries of the Spine and Spinal Cord without Apparent Mechanical Lesion, and Nervous Shock in their Surgical and Medico-Legal Aspects*, Roger Luckhurst explains how "[t]he vastness of the destructive forces, the magnitude of the results, the imminent danger to the lives of numbers of human beings, and the hopelessness of escape from the danger, give rise to emotions which in themselves

1

Although Luckhurst advises one "not to fetishize these technological origins" (24), for another appraisal on trauma's invention as related to the medium of photography, see Ulrich Baer, *Spectral Evidence. The Photography of Trauma*, especially Chapter 1 on Charcot's photographs, which converses, of course, with Georges Didi-Huberman's *Invention of Hysteria: Charcot and the Photographic Iconography of the Salpêtrière*.

are quite sufficient to produce shock" (apud 23). Page, who was the surgeon for the London and North Western Railway Company, which was interested in dismissing the seriousness of these consequences, immediately undermined the force of these traumas, by insisting "that the psychical traumas of railway accidents were forms of hysteria (…) a shameful, effeminate disorder, often dismissed as a form of disease imitation (what was called 'neuromimesis') or malingering" (23).

Even though I ran the risk of presenting a rather too tidy history of trauma theory, one must remember that my aim is to re-purpose trauma theory towards our texts of choice, and not addressing its development *per se*. For that reason, I would argue that in this brief and general outline, another significant development was the one brought about by the discussions on the grave psychological disturbances of Vietnam War veterans, which lead, in great part, to the emergence of the psychological disorder known as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, which not only "entered official diagnostics in 1980" as it also "gave a coherent disease-entity to diverse political programmes and ensured the wide diffusion of the trauma paradigm" (Luckhurst: 59; see also Caruth, *Trauma*: 3). It entered the "official diagnostics" through its inclusion on the third edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, also known as *DSM-III.* One aspect that is important in relation to this is that the *DSM-III* does not distinguish explicitly mental memory and bodily memory (see "Preface" and "Introduction" of Antze and Lambek 1996). Moreover, "PTSD has *not* been a fixed but a very mobile term, progressively extending the types of symptoms and categories of sufferers *outwards* from the initial restrictions on what constituted the traumatic event" (my emphases, Luckhurst, 2008: 29)[2].

The intersection of combat trauma, the Holocaust (which also began a larger public life throughout the late 1960s and 1970s) and the second wave of feminism lead to a profound change in how trauma was dealt with, moving from the secretive and private to more public spheres, from individual healing processes to collective, institutional and political processes. There seems to be a recurrent cycle of expansion and resistance towards the concept of trauma and its social implications. Judith L. Herman writes: "[t]hree times over the past century, a particular form of psychological trauma has surfaced

[2] In the same book, Luckhurst exposed in more detail the opening up of the term: "The revised criteria in 1987 [of PTSD in the *DMS*] thus expanded the elements of re-experiencing to include intrusive recollections, recurrent dreams, 'sudden acting or feeling as if the traumatic even were recurring (includes a sense of reliving the experience, illusions, hallucinations, and associative [flashback] episodes, even those that occur upon awakening or when intoxicate)' and finally a new additional category of ' intense psychological distress at exposure to events that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event'" (2008: 147).

into public consciousness. Each time the investigation of that trauma has flourished in affiliation with a political movement" (from *Trauma and Recovery,* apud Ian Hacking 1996: 69). At this point, one should note, even if briefly, that we are referring mostly to North American sources and developments. In Portugal, women rights were simply nonexistent until 1974, and until this day little has been done to develop an adequate and complete (not to mention timely!) response to the problems of Colonial Wars veterans with combat trauma. Only in 1999 there was appropriate legislation recognising "war stress" as a psychological disease, which would make veterans suffering from it eligible for an invalid pension. Contextualization, as we'll see, is paramount in this address, even if it is necessarily *constructed.*

More recently, and especially where women mental health is concerned, there has been work to expand even further PTSD, which presents a "whole constellation of symptoms," as Kali Tal says. Judith Herman and Christine Courtois seem to be the leading names in this endeavour, taking in consideration prolonged exposure, multiple sources of trauma as well as misdiagnosis and misunderstanding by mental health professionals who do not align the patient's present personality structure with early traumatic experiences. "Complex PTSD" is a broader framework that acts upon the individual psychological health but also on social conditions.[3]

The engagement of (clinical)[4] trauma theory with "the humanities," namely literary and cultural studies (or nonclinical trauma theory), yet another crossing of disciplinary divides, came about in the late 1980s and early 1990s, especially with the works of Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, Dominick LaCapra, Geoffrey Hartman and, arguably the most authoritative voice, Cathy Caruth. All of them were extremely influential, "far beyond the world of academia," as Susannah Radstone attests (2007: 104) even when she criticizes what she sees as the shortcomings of those very same theories (about which more later).

For Caruth, trauma is triggered by an external event that is not perceived at the moment by the traumatised person through the normal structures of memory, recalling thus Freud's words from *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*: "We describe as 'traumatic' any

[3] Moreover, we cannot but stress that this short account does not give a complete picture of the diversity within each discipline. As Roger Luckhurst warns us, "it is valuable to be made aware that psychiatric discourse assumes a *plurality* of possible responses to traumatic impacts" (2008: 211, original emphasis).

[4] As a caveat, I bear in mind Paul Antze's words: "As a matter of historical fact, psychoanalysis has always been something more than a clinical technique or a mental science. It is also a set of interpretative practices. In this latter guise its theories take on a different kind of importance; they are no longer simply models *of* reality but models *for* understanding" (in Radstone and Hogkin 2003: 100).

excitations from outside which are powerful enough to break through the protective shield." Indebted to neurobiology (especially the work of Bessel van der Kolk, whom she quotes often and with whom she seems to establish a "symbiotic" relationship, one of the bones of contention of Ruth Leys), Caruth will posit that this experience is "unclaimed," it cannot be promptly accessed by conscious recall, like regular memories. It is "engraved" on the mind, with such a literal power that while unrecognised (i.e., not going through *cognition*) it is only through impromptu, indirect means – Caruth mentions flashbacks and dreams, among others – is it experienced, but as if unmediated: it is as if the person was re-living the traumatic event all over again. In other words, only later, when the wounding is enacted once again, does it take place. The traumatic experience is not "remembered" as a past event, integrated in a "normal" structure of a self-centred, embodied narrative time, it irrupts as a "present" experience, and that is its overwhelming disruptive power. This opens to profound aporias about trauma's referentiality. As she writes in *Unclaimed Experience*, "[i]f return is displaced by trauma, then, this is significant in so far as its leaving - the space of unconsciousness - is paradoxically what precisely preserves the event in its literality. For history to be a history of trauma means that it is referential precisely to the extent that it is not fully perceived as it occurs; or to put it somewhat differently, that a history can be grasped only in the very inaccessibility of its occurrence" (187). There is a split of the personality, as it were, creating two divided selves, one of which is the traumatized one that will "survive" within the self and which will return, unchanged by history, every time the "containing" self, the one who inhabits history comes across his or her own trauma.

This divisiveness of the self was to be found right at the beginning, when Breuer and Freud wrote in *Studies in Hysteria* about "the presence of a dissociation, a splitting of the content of consciousness," being the hysterical attacks characterised by "the recurrence of a physical state which the patient has experienced earlier" (apud van der Kolk et al., 1996: 30). Ruth Leys and Susannah Radstone, however, will criticize this apparently literality of the preserved event, as it seems to bypass the unconscious. In any case, the two "fields" or "schools" that would develop (the so-called "mimetic" and the "anti-mimetic" fields[5]) seem to agree on perceiving trauma as an experience which brings the experiencer into contact with some sort of limit, perhaps that which Maurice Blanchot called the *disaster*. This in turn will shape the subject's own processes of subjectivity, both emotional and cognitive.

[5] Blatantly polemical, Leys discusses the "anti-mimetic" genealogy of trauma as "a strict dichotomy between the autonomous subject and the external trauma" (2000: 9).

I want to stress once again the fact that this is a dissertation about artistic texts, not people. About the place of those texts in a public arena, a political arena, considering, along Jill Bennett, that "visual arts presents trauma as a *political* rather than a subjective phenomenon. It does not offer us a privileged view of the inner subject; rather, by giving trauma extension in space or lived *place*, it invites an awareness of different modes of inhabitation" (2005: 12). And where artistic creation is concerned, the structure of that disastrous experience will have its correspondence with the way the chosen medium is structured. In the present case, comics.

Criticisms of Caruth et al. arose quite early. Felman and Laub's book *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History* was issued in 1992, Caruth's edited anthology *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* dates from 1995 and her own monograph *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* came out a year later. Quite surprisingly, Kali Tal's *World of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma*, was published immediately in 1996. Having had several editions, including one updated 3rd revision online[6], Tal's revised PhD dissertation not only expanded the theory as it criticized its limited scope. Above all, Kal demanded "the reintroduction of a political and ethical dimension to the interpretation of texts dealing with trauma and memory" (online version, n.p.). Tal and, more recently, other scholars – such as Stef Craps and Maurice Stevens, for instance - have pointed out how the edifice constructed by trauma theory has focused mainly on Western models, as much as it has worked with Western-made tools and categories.

With both this history and these criticisms in mind, we can understand how "trauma" was always already an umbrella term. According to Sam Durrant, Homi Bhabha would call it a "travelling theory," considering how it was "borrowed by Freud from conventional medicine and put to work as analogy or metaphor, and that the metaphoricity of trauma as a description is necessarily heightened by attempts to extrapolate from the clinical understanding of trauma in individuals to notions of collective or cultural trauma" (2005: n.p.).

Consequently then, from its very beginning trauma is a concept that invites a multidisciplinary approach. As Dominick LaCapra writes, "trauma invites distortion, disrupts genres or bounded areas, and threatens to collapse distinctions. (…) no genre or discipline 'owns' trauma as a problem or can define definitive boundaries for it" (2001*:* 96),

[6] URL: http://kalital.com/Text/Worlds/index.html [last accessed March 2013].

to which Luckhurst adds: "Trauma is also always a breaching of disciplines." Later on, discussing Bruno Latour's re-bonding of science and culture, Luckhurst discusses as this only strengthens the very notion at stake: "A scientific concept therefore succeeds through its heterogeneity rather than its purity" (14). Sara Murphy also argues this, when she quotes M. Seltzer (*Serial Killers*) in considering trauma as a "borderland concept," and in a more challenging and provocative note, she says that "only those who would want to make of psychoanalysis a normativizing and coherent apologia for bourgeois individualism would see such conceptual impurity as flaw" (in Ball 2007: 94). This is what will allow Murphy for the gendering and affective turn of trauma theory she searches.

At any rate, for the purposes of this dissertation, I will consider trauma as "an abrupt and transitory stoppage in the individual's efficient personality operations" (apud Rappaport 1968; cf. Kardiner 1941), i.e., an overwhelming event experienced by the individual that is not fully understood at that precise point, leading to a momentary perceptual blindness and whose repercussions at psychological, emotional and even perhaps physical levels are felt through symptoms, or displaced effects. More often than not, the results of trauma are fragmentary, mysterious, uncanny, and are spread in several directions. It is through the analysis of discontinuous elements in the individual's expression, verbal, physical or otherwise, that one may eventually perceive and map back the presence of a traumatic phantasm, which is to say, perhaps we will not be able to fully and directly reconstitute the traumatic event *per se*, but the invisible, unapproachable core where it should lie.

Moreover, in addressing whatever kind of trauma, one should always avoid its absolute detachment from social and historical contextualization, leading to a sort of reification, lest we fall into that which John Mowitt calls "trauma envy," where "trauma acquires transcendental status. Everything is potentially traumatic. Under these circumstances, trauma has come to be invested with such authority and legitimacy that it elicits a concomitant desire to have suffered it, or if not the unspeakable event itself, then the testimonial agency it is understood to produce" (2007: 130).

Becoming Small.

But what kinds of traumas are the ones I want to address?

It is thanks to the intensification of trauma theory via cultural studies, especially with post-colonial studies, that it becomes even more expanded – an "outfolding," as Sam Durrant calls it (2005: n.p.) - and attentive towards a wider number of the disenfranchised. Portuguese philosopher José Gil makes an analysis of the present situation of Portugal in his book *Portugal, Hoje. O medo de existir* (translatable as "Portugal, Today. The Fear of Being"). Although it has already more than a decade, and the economic crisis has gotten worse since 2010/2011, when Portugal embarked in its three-year package for economic recovery (not yet assured), many of the notions presented by Gil not only still hold water as they've become even more apposite to our times. In that portrait, and associating it to Deleuze's notion on the societies of control (albeit drawing from Foucault's work), Gil talks about that which I am calling "small traumas," even if he uses different terms: "little terrors at the office, at the company, at the newspaper, at the university, the terror of not being good enough, of being pointed at, of being punished, of loosing one's job, of getting fat, of not getting fat, of not knowing (how to raise the kids, how to be a woman, how to be joyful and dynamic, attractive and sexy, and so on and so forth)" (my translation, 2004: 122). A little further ahead, he devises the sort of motto that I have used as an epigraph: "There is no quotidian life in contemporary societies of control that does not presupposes a form of microterror" (idem). Other commentators and researchers have also been sensitive to this impervious situation, such as Gabrielle Schwab, who, in a study on transgenerational trauma, and how especially violent histories create an intergenerational dialogue and intersection of experiences and narratives, says that "[t]here is no life without trauma" (2010: 42).

One of the paths leading trauma theory closer to these other experiences is the one proposed by Susannah Radstone in her many papers, on a move towards reconsidering how memory is articulated with the public sphere, that is to say, how it is always already mediated, especially through the materiality of the body and the "broader social formation in which [the terms mediation and articulation as related to memory] are forged" (2005: 134-135). Studying "the specific tropes, codes and conventions of personal memory's diverse articulations produce new understandings of the knowledge that memory can provide. This is a knowledge not of the past itself, but of how memory, or 'memorial consciousness' is constructed and of its relation to the social and to the past" (136). Radstone criticizes the way trauma theory, following what she and Leys call an "anti-mimetic" model, "takes the traumatic *event* as its theoretical foundation" (original emphasis, 2007: 12), and how that event would be recorded in memory in a totally different

manner than any other witnessed or experienced things. In fact, it would be *recorded* pristinely, and not through the unconscious, which means for Radstone always already mediated processes of memory. Gabrielle Schwab, for instances, speaks of trauma "encapsulat[ing] the unbearable affects generated by a catastrophic event in a space that will remain sealed off from the everyday and, in most cases, from the free flow of memory" (2010: 113). But for Radstone's and Ley's critical view, such a stance becomes "compatible with, and often gives way to, the idea that trauma is a purely external event that befalls a fully constituted Subject" (Ruth Leys, apud Radstone 2007: 15). This focus on the event itself, and not on how the subject's own mind classifies and even reifies the event or a certain class of events, at the same time that it selects or even appoints which individuals can be traumatized by it and those who are excluded from it. Radstone gives the contrasting examples of 9/11 and the Rwanda genocide.

There is this elegant, organised idea, one that provides a clean-cut narrative.

The subject of trauma was a sound, fully constituted and integrated individual, before being overwhelmed by the traumatic event, which makes him or her identifiable and eligible as vulnerable, and able to elicit our empathy/sympathy.

However, the blind spot of this notion is that there are a number of individuals that are not amenable to traumatogenic situations, because, perhaps, they are already in overwhelming situations that "makes them used to it," from people living in war-torn places to people living in difficult, if not miserable, economic situations. This is one of the reasons why the very building of Trauma Studies must be critically addressed, along with its choice of texts, objects of study and even subjects, to prevent it leading towards "a silencing of discussion which leaves hanging any number of questions about the continuingly problematic nature of academic discussion of trauma and the apparent acceptability of debate only of certain types of material and not others" (Radstone 2007: 22).

However, I wonder if these criticisms are totally warranted in relation to the foundation of Trauma Studies, considering on how Cathy Caruth is rather direct in the introduction to *Trauma. Explorations in Memory*, when she explains that trauma is not typified

> "by the event itself - which may or may not be catastrophic, and may not traumatize everyone equally – nor can it be defined in terms of a distortion of the event, achieving its

> haunting power as result of *distorting* personal significances attached to it. The pathology consists, rather, solely in *the structure of its experience* or reception: the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repressed *possession* of the one who experiences it. To be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event" (1995: 4)

But, as Stef Craps and Gert Buelens argue, one thing is to affirm this, the other is to actually engage with subjects and critical instruments that do not belong to a "Western canon" of trauma (2008: 2; see also Craps 2013: 2). Some of those points of criticism, however, underlining the lack of recognition of collective experiences such as slavery, genocide, racial violence, or also the apparently lesser forms of socio-economic aggression (even within the so-called First World), emphasise the lack of engagement with "local knowledges," which take place through the integration of non-Western peoples and cultures into prefabricated categories, being "trauma" itself the crowning category (cf. Stevens 2009).

But there is for Radstone yet an even more profound problem, which has to do with the loss of the valuable lessons of psychoanalysis, namely, "the radical lesson of Freud," "the radical ungovernability of the unconscious" (2007: 16, 18). As the quote above from Caruth indicates, there is an ineluctable bond between the person's individuality and that person's trauma. That is to say, instead of generalising about either a type of traumatic event or whatever class of people, there is a paradoxical move that we need to do. On the one hand, we have to pay attention to the particularities and idiosyncrasies of the subject. And on the other, we have to inquire about the social and political context that made the trauma take place, or in other words, how it became possible.

By refocusing beyond the individual by no means leads to forget its impact and the terrible consequences it has upon those who suffered the trauma, but is to engage politically with the roots of the possibility of trauma. By studying and referring to Christopher Colvin's work on South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Radstone shows how he "argues that the dominance of the language of trauma and victimhood in post-apartheid South Africa carries with it the assumption that a therapeutic language linked to the witnessing of survivor memories can be appropriately applied to a group or a nation, as well as to an individual." This leads to the problematic assumption that "[t]rauma… is the central mode and consequence of power" (Colvin, apud Radstone: 143). Consequently, "a stress on personal memories of suffering and on individual

testimony to abuse displaces attention from continuing structural inequalities" (144). As I've mentioned, the intersection of post-colonial studies and trauma theory has lead some of the discussions back to collective issues, as Stef Craps and Gert Beulens have done in their co-edited *Studies in the Novel* issue (see "Introduction," 2008: pp. 3-4). As of course, neither Colvin nor Radstone are arguing for an end of such discussions of acts of witnessing. Nor are other authors, myself included, that aim to a certain decentralization, asking for the ongoing and evermore deeper understanding of those "big issues" to come to an end. Rather, Radstone and the others are engaging with Tal's steps towards the politicisation of the cultural representation of traumatic experiences, and want to emphasize the result that this position corrects the tendency "to screen from attention broader issues of economic and political power that exceed those of relations between individuals" (144). Craps and Beulens consider that there are "ultimately depoliticizing tendencies" in the Western models of trauma treatment (2008: 4), and these steps allow us to return to a political re-inscription, to a renewed attention towards the contextual specificities of these texts, more than provide an attitude *against* a dominant trauma discourse. As of course, I cannot avoid being Eurocentric, as I will not be dealing with overarching transnational issues but with the way contemporary authors deal with recent history or autobiographical artists examine the economic precariousness of their own situations, within Portugal, which I will describe as in a *semi-peripheral* role in the following chapter.

Nonetheless, one must bear in mind that attention to "other" traumatic experiences was there, right at the beginning of literature studies-informed trauma theory, and also at the core of its clinical employment. In Caruth's collection *Trauma. Explorations in Memory*, we find Laura S. Brown's essay "Not Outside the Range: One Feminist Perspective on Psychic Trauma." Point in fact, this was the very point of departure for my own project. Brown, a feminist clinical psychologist, starts her essay by discussing the criteria used in the *Diagnostic and Statistic Manual of Mental Disorders*, or DSM, to define trauma, or "post-traumatic stress disorder." Written in 1991, the essay is referring to the *DSM III-R*, which is the revised 1987 version of the *DSM III*, originally from 1980. Brown is particularly taxed by "criterion A," which requires an event that is "infrequent, unusual, or outside of a mythical human norm of experience" (Brown 1995: 111). What passes as unusual creates from the outset a very narrow understanding of "normalcy" in experience:

> "The ranges of human experience becomes the range of what is normal and usual in the lives of men of the dominant class; white, young, able-bodied, educated, middleclass, Christian men. Trauma is thus that which disrupts these particular human lives, but no other" (Idem: 101).

And Brown wants to go beyond such a narrow range and encompass experiences from people that do not belong to those societal criteria.

By the end of the article, she knows that the criteria and symptomatology is "undergoing change" for the then-upcoming *DSM IV*, and in fact she would address this change in future work, but that was the point of contention at the time. According to criterion A, trauma was seen as "an event outside the range of usual human experience that would be frightening or threatening to almost anyone." If this seemed to unproblematically encapsulate the experience of Holocaust survivors, war veterans, and individuals that went through natural catastrophes or were exposed to violent events (such as rape, attempted murder, assault), it left out other complicated situations, such as incest, which despite its mind-boggling statistical presence in the U.S., was called a "secret trauma" by feminist writer Diana E. H. Russell, whom Brown quotes.

Given the fact that I am neither dealing with clinical cases nor these topical issues in particular, more importantly for the present work is Brown's assessment that to consider trauma to be "outside the range of *usual* human experience" reinforces the neat narrative mentioned before, as well as a specific allocation of those who are "traumatizable" (cf. the quote above). But Brown wants to shift our attention towards the lives of many under an apparently invisible yet "constant presence and threat of trauma," which under the purveyance of dominant culture becomes "a continuing background noise rather than an unusual event" (102-103).

Brown, along with Kali Tal, Stef Craps and others, contribute towards an alternative notion of trauma, one that is not event-based, or *punctual*, but rather as culturally embedded ongoing processes that enable traumatogenic settings in relation to certain people. It is constructed by social forces and it is within the social texture. Not everyone within that social model will feel or react the same way, of course, as Cathy Caruth herself pointed out.

This does not mean that there is not always resistance against this conceptual expansion, as we've seen. In fact, much of the resistance against trauma's conceptual

expansion has been fought within courtrooms, and it is precisely that legal aspect that makes Roger Luckhurst say that "…it emphasized the extent to which trauma was not a 'matter of fact', as Latour puts it, but a 'matter of concern,' an enigmatic thing that prompts perplexity, debate and contested opinion" (2008: 33). Just as at the end of the 19th century the insurance companies fought against the "elasticity" of trauma, so did some agents of the U.S. legal system were actively resistant for it to become an "umbrella term." Brown gives a particular example of a female patient of hers, and in that account tells us how the psychiatrist that was referred by the insurance company of the woman's employer "excoriates those who would stretch the definition of trauma to include such daily occurrences," such as being hassled at work (1995: 104; an occurrence that José Gil would call a "microaggression," which becomes increasingly worse as it is repeated). There is not much difference here, I think, from the way that Herbert W. Page, the railway company surgeon who dismissed the psychological shock as a mere *effeminate* disorder[7], and it is also felt today when people dismiss the "complaints" of people addressing an unjust economical situation/context as traumatic, dislocating the "fault" towards the persons who complain. As I mentioned in the beginning, in Portugal war-associated traumas are still not a legal reality, so from a strictly legal point of view, *there is no* problem.

Brown is well-aware of the possibility of trauma's extension into other realms, but, similarly to Radstone, above all she argues for its engagement with social, economic, political and gender issues as well. Conscious of the work by people such as Marianne Hirsch, Brown writes:

> "Mainstream trauma theory has begin to recognize that post-traumatic symptoms can be intergenerational, as in the case of children of survivors of the Nazi Holocaust. We have yet to admit that it can spread *laterally* throughout an oppresses social group as well, when membership in that group means a constant lifetime risk of exposure to certain trauma.," [people] "for whom insidious trauma is a way of life": (my emphasis and ellipsis, 1995: 107-108).

With the term "insidious trauma," Brown is quoting from yet another therapist colleague, Maria Root, a notion which stands for "the traumatogenic effects of oppression that are not necessarily overtly violent or threatening to bodily well-being at the given moment but that do violence to the soul and spirit" (idem: 107). The kernel of the issue is to acknowledge the existence also of estrangement and suffering in these smaller traumas.

[7] The gender-laden used of "effeminate" opens up, as of course, the precise problems that would be addressed by some of the trauma theorists already mentioned.

We have to be beware of oversimplification, here. "Small" in this case wants to respect all types of trauma, and the necessary discourses about them across disciplines. It does not seek to create hierarchies nor to downplay the suffering of those who have "small traumas." I acknowledge the overwhelming importance given to the discussion of such a transhistorical event such as the Holocaust, and there is no comparison attempted here between that and the musings of an unemployed, white, male, cultured artist in the peaceful, contemporary city of Porto. But to focus one's attention towards one problem does not come at the expense of any other problem one might wish to address.

In this sense I am, hopefully, paying attention to a very specific "political-historical and social" and "cultural context [that] should not be excluded from trauma research, for it determines how symptoms are experienced and expressed and provides a framework for understanding traumatic events, opportunities for healing and therapeutic possibilities" (Sibylle Rothkegel, apud Kaplan 2005: 68). Memories themselves "are never simply records of the past, but are interpretive reconstructions that bear the imprint of local narrative conventions, cultural assumptions, discursive formations and practices, and social contexts of recall and commemoration" (Antze and Lambek 1996: vii).

I think it is worth it to quote Maurice Stevens (2009) at length:

> "Rather than thinking of trauma as an identifiable and discrete event that must have occurred at some specific point in time and place, it can be more usefully understood as a cultural object whose meanings far exceed the boundaries of any particular shock or disruption; rather than being restricted by the common sense ideas we possess that allow us to think of trauma as authentic evidence of something "having happened there," a snapshot whose silver plate and photon are analogues to the psyche and impressions fixed in embodied symptoms, the real force of trauma flowers in disparate and unexpected places. And, like most cultural objects, trauma, too, circulates among various social contexts that give it differing meanings and co-produce its multiple social effects. Like most cultural objects, trauma's component memes, those pivotal conceptualizations that tailor its function, have origins that can be traced to coordinates that vary in time, space and semiosis; coordinates whose ideological concerns come to refract or anchor trauma's meanings simply by occupying the same temporo-spatio-semiotic location" (3).

In my view, the insistence on the same kinds of texts over and over again runs the danger of crystallizing what can be thought of as trauma, which situations can be deemed traumatic, who are entitled to discuss trauma, and so on, making ever more invisible the

plights of those left out. As Stevens writes, these are the stories that remain "un-included... [h]unched over and squinting, it worries at the frayed ends of incomplete narratives and hidden transcripts," they are "history's lacunae." It is our collective task to not loose sight of those left behind by the overarching account of normative trauma theory. In other words, it is to take a Benjaminian, redemptive stance towards historiography.[8]

I will also not forget that there are no non-embodied, non-marked statements, no isolated, absolute, timeless truths (starting with my own). However, this also should not allow us to fall into a sort of desperate relativism that would suspend any possibility of ethical responsibility and even principles. So the questions that follow are: how do the texts I'm discussing address their own inscription in society? If they are not addressing war, physical violence, political oppression, violent gender oppression, what kind of problems are they talking about that can be seen through the lenses of trauma studies? How do the autobiographical protagonists see themselves? What kind of role do they assume? Do they see themselves as part of the problems they may address or as victims of society, or is it something more complicated than that? To put it in other terms: what kind of self-formation is at stake in these texts and how to they relate to trauma? Always an ongoing negotiation, these questions are crucial.

Trauma and Comics.

As socially embedded texts, comics are of course open to cultural criticism and political assessment, so it comes as no surprise to analyse both the art form and precise artefacts under the trauma glass. As it is known, in the last decades, and increasingly so, comics have been through a frank expansion where genre and readership diversity, storytelling complexity, ethical, cultural and transnational frameworks are concerned. Autobiography, self-fiction, non-fiction, reportage, diaries and journals, and even essay, are but a few genres that have been increasingly exploited by the medium of comics.

Arguably, the first discussions bringing trauma theory to the realm of comics – or is it the other way around? - were the studies that focused on Art Spiegelman's *Maus*. Famously, Marianne Hirsch coined her concept of *postmemory* thanks to her reading of this book (1992-93; see also the opening page of http://www.postmemory.net/). Robert S. Leventhal, for instance, addressed it in a 1995 ground-breaking article which underlined the

[8] See "Theses on the Philosophy of History," especially theses II and VI (2007: pp. 253-254 and 255).

mechanisms through which the author reinvented a self, or constructed a self within the text, that was able to cope with the overwhelming nature of his parent's experiences in Nazi Germany and the Holocaust. One of Dominick LaCapra's chapter in *History and Memory After Auschwitz* (1998) is dedicated to Spiegelman's book (although the back cover, somewhat coy or defensively, writes *comic book* between inverted commas). Pierre-Alban Delannoy published an entire monograph in 2003 focusing on the integration of the book within that historical framework, using some of the methodologies warranted by trauma studies: Maus *d'Art Spiegelman. Bande dessinée et Shoah*. But one immediate problem with this outstanding and crucial work around Spiegelman's most famous work to date crystallised the notion that *Maus* appears as the proverbial exception that confirms the rule of comics' overall poverty of diversity, where themes, representation and subjectivity is concerned. Granted, when the first volume was issued in 1986, there was a dearth of diversity of comics within the United States that addressed such powerful, personal, genre-defying, adult-oriented issues, and the works that had broken the moulds of the usual genres and styles – say, Pekar's *American Splendor* and Justin Green's *Binky Brown Meets the Holy Virgin Mary* - were not particularly famous beyond the comics milieu.[9] But the world of comics is not limited to the North-American output and, since then, of course, things have changed dramatically in terms of supply. But even taking that in account, it is still rather surprising reading Leventhal considering comics as a "medium usually reserved for hero-construction and morality play" (1995). Comics scholarship has come a long way as well, though. It has expanded exponentially and even dramatically, and today the ever-expanding bibliography has multiple choices where methodologies, perspectives, social positioning and *corpora* are concerned.

But despite this diversity and also an ever-expanding market of translated works (especially between France and the U.S., but also other countries such as Spain, Germany, Belgium, Korea, Japan, which have not only a lively local production but also a thriving market for translated comics), and an increasing international dialogue of comics scholars, the selection when discussing trauma gravitate more often than not around certain titles, authors and themes. *Maus* is still the favourite subject, by far, but after 9/11 there is an unsurprisingly strong incidence of studies on Spiegelman's own *In the Shadows of No Towers*, along with Alissa Torres's and Sungyoon Choi's *American Widow.* Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* and Keiji Nakazawa's *Barefoot Gen* are also recurrent examples for

[9] Moreover, they existed in *comic book* format, which limited their circulation. See Gabillet 2005, especially pgs. 123 and ff.

autobiographical accounts that place the protagonists within a larger, historical traumatic event (respectively, the Iranian 1970 Revolution and the Hiroshima bombing). Auto- or semiautobiographical works, even if not centrally crossing with nation-wide historical events, that is to say, texts that focus more immediately on the life of the individual within his personal surroundings, especially if it affects issues of sexuality, disease and tense parent-child relationships are also fodder for the field: Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*, Chris Ware's *Jimmy Corrigan*, David B.'s *L'ascension du haut mal/Epileptic*, David Small's *Stitches*, are just a few of the favourites.

It should come as no surprise that autobiographical comics and related genres have such a prominence. Its current critical prestige, in both the academia and the popular world, make it a special space for these discussions to take place, as it opens widely to a number of other pertinent current issues, including those that can be thought of under the term "small trauma." Jane Tolmie (2013), addressing a specific and judicious number of autobiographical (or semi-autobiographical or even Lynda Barry's *autobifictionalography*) work by women cartoonists, is quite attentive towards the issues launched by L. S. Brown, to the extent that one can address, under the glass of trauma theory, very diverse comics texts, from the horribly explicit (Debbie Dreschler's *Daddy's Girl*) to the elliptic (Lynda Barry's *One! Hundred! Demons!*), from the grave and sharp (Phoebe Gloeckner's *Diary of a Teenage Girl*) to the fantastical and funny (Julie Doucet's books). "[These texts, especially the ones by Debbie Dreschler and Lynda Barry] emphasize repeated and quotidian traumas, trauma of gender inequity, traumas set in the home and enacted and re-enacted every day. In a sense, these texts are about what is perfectly ordinary and one thing that is perfectly ordinary is that it is impossible to separate mind and body, word and image, emotion and politics" (2013 :xvi).[10] Additionally, autobiography opens up to what Catherine Mao calls "two parallel paths": on the one hand, that of *exemplarity*, in which the narrator erases him- or herself to guide the focus toward the represented reality at the core of the narrative (the examples of Joe Sacco and Étienne Davodeau, precisely for working on slightly de-centred genres that move towards journalism, are paramount); on the other

[10] Gender issues play a role, although I will not, conspicuously so, address work made by Portuguese women artists, with the exception of Joana Figueiredo. It is not that there is a total absence of feminine comic artists in Portugal, even though there is a despairingly larger number of men in relation to women. A study of women artists in Portugal would deserve its own monograph, but unfortunately this is not the forum to have this discussion. However, I do believe, with Jared Gardner, that there is an intimate relationship between the emergence of the autobiographical comics field (understood as largely as possible so that it would include auto-fiction and other borderland cases) with the feminist political and artistic movements of the 1960s-1970s (2008: 14). Whitlock, Chute, DeKoven, Chase are also good points of departure for such a study.

hand, that of the *exception* of autobiography, in which everything is aimed to construct the author's individual life (Mao 2013: paragraph 8).

Most of these works address more or less autobiographical or "real" settings that allow us to conceive of these texts as addressing whatever notion we can have of reality: a tangible, consensual, contingent historical experience (*Jimmy Corrigan* is fiction, after all). We are not here, as of yet, addressing a Lacanian Real, or that subject's 'sense of reality' supported by fantasy as discussed by Žižek (1997: 84), and to which we'll return later. But even within the marvellous (in a Todorovian sense) premise of super-heroes, the personal traumas of Bruce Wayne/Batman, Peter Parker/Spider-man, and other characters are addressed using the methodological tools developed with both clinical and critical trauma studies, leading to very interesting results. As I've quoted from Martyn Pedler's study in the introduction, his study combines the analysis of the events within the fictions (the murders of Bruce Wayne's/Batman's parents and of Peter Parker's/Spiderman's uncle) and their economic-structural serialization (monthly comic books), so that in his perspective the repetition and insistence in revisiting these character's personal traumas become an intrinsic part of the comics' textuality (2012: 3)

Using the data search engine at the excellent Bonner Online-Bibliographie zur Comicforschung of the Bonn University (http://www.comicforschung.uni-bonn.de/), one of the notable results in this cursory considerations is that attention towards Holocaust studies converging on works that bring together texts and images lead to the interesting provision of papers on Charlotte Salomon's *Leben? Oder Theatre?*, although one would be advised to read them carefully to understand how far these efforts are informed by comics studies or comics-related interests.

I am not saying that the titles and authors mentioned above are the only ones addressed by the meeting of trauma and comics studies. In fact, using the *Comicforschung* database I've come across studies on Jacques Tardi and Farid Boujdellal[11], or Neil Gaiman and Dave McKean's *Signal to Noise*.

But there is more or less a recurrent cluster of names, titles and genres that still needs to be addressed by its integration on a wider scope of comics production and methodological approaches.

[11] Precisely two authors that create a special space for the voice of "Others" not usually contemplated by mainstream comics. See the two "twin" essays Moura 2012a and Moura 2012b.

An Intersection.

Marco Mende's *Diário Rasgado* project, Miguel Rocha's solo and collaborative books addressing recent Portuguese history, and the alternative, experimental work of artists like Joana Figueiredo, Miguel Carneiro and others may not have much in common at a first glance. But despite using very different strategies and resulting in very different outcomes, more often than not they all address issues that deal with human memory, contradictory relationships with the Other (whether in terms of family or in broader social units – gender, nation, religion, sexuality), or self-exploration. Sometimes, these themes overlap and inform each other, creating complex, intricate texts. There is a more or less coherent corpus of contemporary comics that create a vision of and to the past, *telescoping it through the present*, to paraphrase Walter Benjamin. But looking back never reaches the original events and objects in their pristine condition: there are always distortions, displacements, silences and tricks of the language (of the whole medium). This will become paramount when discussing trauma. This looking back is tinted by nostalgia in its Greek etymological sense, i.e., "the wounds of returning." "Wound" can also be rendered in Greek as "trauma," and it is this concept that will help us map the strength, nature and even aesthetic value of some contemporary comics made in Portugal.

These texts deal with aspects of the collective, whether through the dialogue that Miguel Rocha's books establish directly with historical moments and characters, Marco Mendes' "x-ray" of the contemporaneous life of socio-economic precarity in Porto, or the collective, experimental practices of Joana Figueiredo and Miguel Carneiro. They do not only reflect or create different facets of that possibility of the collective, they have been founded already by it, they are interdependent on several lines of its development (from zines to artist's collectives to collaborations). This will inform unavoidably the way through which they treat their narratives and the way they convey experiences, memories, and history. "It is not so much that our memories go in or come from many directions, but rather that they are always composites of dynamically interrelated and conflicted histories," according to Gabriele Schwab (2010: 29-30).

The authors I will be dealing with do not examine the roots of the situations, the social, political and economical mechanisms that allow for contemporary precariousness, or the establishment of the Estado Novo and its pervasive *Weltanschauung* that was imposed on urban and country life alike (a dichotomy that will make sense when addressing Miguel Rocha's books). They are not creating essays or reportage or historiography on comics form. To a certain extent, they are following one of the tenets of trauma theory, in that it is impossible to understand the source of trauma, or is even considered obscene (cf. Claude Lanzmann, in Caruth 1995) to do so. They focus on the consequences, on the way daily contemporary life is contaminated through and through by such trauma. When they "look back at the past," it's less to retrieve it "as it was," than to signal that very desire of looking back.

More than addressing an external, juridically verifiable truth, and going beyond dichotomies between autobiography and autofiction, etc., the texts I will address, especially Marco Mendes' work, create a "self-reflexive reconceptualizing of the genre" (La Cour 2010: 45). But the case of Mendes, and autobiographical comics in general, are a privileged site of discussions around trauma and comics, as we've seen. As Mihaela Precup writes in her doctoral dissertation, precisely addressing this "genre" and trauma, "[t]he autobiographical story both gives access to either marginalized or forgotten experiences, or permits us to examine the interplay between individual experience and collective cultural and social practices" (2010: n.p.). This looking back allows them in a way, aim to "represent the truth while recognizing the intangibility of such an endeavor" (La Cour 2010: 46).

Kali Tal, following the major tenets of trauma theory as posited by Caruth et al., writes that the history of trauma is made of past, inaccessible events, that are not "fully perceived as they occur— [and are] given meaning later in a process of narrative construction" (1996, n.p.). However, some of the authors I'll be dealing with do not create stories in their most classical sense. They negotiate several forms of narrative, sometimes even things that may be called non-narrative, or poetic or experimental forms. Drawing from a Janet Walker's phrase, we will find in these texts "fluid boundaries" (114) between fantasy and memory and history… Fantasy plays a decisive role here, as it is not played *against* reality, but, according to Žižek and other writers, it is constitutive of the subject's reality itself. So to consider both classical forms of narrative and experimental forms of comics can perhaps be a good way to think how a certain culture, "imagined community"

(Benedict Anderson) or "structure of feeling" (Raymond Williams) both responds to society and also "creates, by new perceptions and responses, elements which the society, as such, is not able to realize" (Williams 2001: 86).

Almost naturally, art plays a role here, because it is an alternative way of knowing, born out of a not-knowing. As Jean-Michel Rey writes, "Where I know, I do not write; where I write, I can know only belatedly [*après-coup*], as if in a different context" (1982: 305). That is the very condition of possibility of the creative act itself, something also pointed out by Georges Perec, "The unsayable is not buried inside writing, it is what prompted it in the first place" (from *W, of the Memory of Childhood*, apud Schwab 2010: 59), but that Maurice Blanchot sees as the re-institution, a repetition[12], of the trauma itself: "Write in order not simply to destroy, in order not simply to conserve, in order not to transmit; write in the thrall of the impossible real, that share of disaster wherein every reality, safe and sound, sinks." (1986: 38). I think this is neither incompatible with the idea that trauma is "unrepresentable" (especially if we consider this is relation to the psychosomatic behaviours studied by van der Kolk, because they don't go through symbolic elaboration, as dreams do), or with the way artistic and creative efforts aim to respond to their respective topicality.

Geoffrey H. Hartmann refers that "[t]raumatic knowledge, then, would seem to be *a contradiction in terms*" (my emphasis, 1995: 537). Hartman goes into a discussion that wishes to bring literary texts as ways, not of retrieving (pristine) memories but rather a re-expression of them, opening up "the possibility of poetry as a more absolute speech" (542), in which "[t]raumatic and artistic kinds of knowledge conspire to produce their own mode of recognition" and " a view of art as at once testimony and representation" (545).

J.-M. Rey, on his study about Freud's relationship with writing, and in an understanding of the role of language, especially creative language, in the splitting of the self, points out to its (and, by extension, to other art forms as well, I believe) transformative potential through its formal specificities: "In other words, literature softens, veils, clothes what it exposes: the themes that it constitutes or borrows elsewhere," associating this with Freud's dictum, "[b]ut poetic treatment is impossible without softening and disguise"[13] (Rey 1982: apud (315-316). The verbs used by Rey also relate to

[12] Perhaps even in the theatrical sense of the French word, *répétition*, "rehearsal".

[13] The original German reads "Aber ohne Milderung und Verhüllung ist die poetische Bearbeitung nicht möglich."

Freud's recurrent terms, such as "Milderung" (*softening* or *mitigation*), "Ableitung" (*derivation*), "Verhüllung" (*disguising*) and "Verkleidung" (*clothing*). But we have to understand that this creative transformation does not allow us to confuse this type of knowledge or approach to such traumas as having intimacy about them (and even less so with the artists themselves as individuals). I want to avoid the idea that "the best kind of text about trauma will therefore transmit trauma 'itself' rather than knowledge about it, [which] makes it possible for critics to embrace an aestheticized despair while construing that embrace as political wisdom" (Forter 2007: 282). This would a good opportunity to take in consideration Dominick LaCapra's notion of *empathy*, or *empathetic unsettlement*, an ethical responsibility when addressing trauma, which I'll address later on.

While not considering comics "the best form" of representing, discussing or opening up a path to address trauma, I would like to argue that despite the fact that historically developed and more widely socially accepted art forms such as cinema and literature have addressed trauma in many ways, the medium of comics has also its very own means to engage with, dig in, and express *trauma*. No art form is intrinsically superior to one other art form. And I also hope to show some diversity within this art form. We will come across examples of comics which are anti-linear, fragmented, self-reflexive, and which foreground materiality, and other tenets of post-modern textuality (typically the core of comics address in the existent studies). But we will engage with more traditional forms as well, with some degree of realism, following causality and organizing clear narrative arcs. I am not interested in a generalised discussion bur rather in an analysis of a selection of texts which I feel may illuminate these issues. Generally speaking, comics are a hybrid form, bringing together in a same plane of expression fragmentary yet significant images and a sequential or flux narrative state. Of course, the inherent manifold nature of comics complicates this account, but let us focus on that dichotomy for now. The convergence of images that should be read, verbal texts that should be integrated in the communicative aspect of comics, symbols that stand for specific actions, and several other elements of signification that may be used in the medium – expressive colours, structures and patterns, sound words/onomatopoeias, diagrams, leitmotivs, the principle of *tressage* (cf. Groensteen 1999), typologies of *mise en page*, panel transitions, and even the importance of formats and overall book design, etc. –, make comics a complex, multifaceted mode of expression that may play out the fragmentary, uncanny and unintegrated nature of trauma in a very telling way.

And I am perfectly aware that any selectivity will bespeak of a specific history and that whatever history one may create will be always selective (a Derridean "archive," as it were). Less that creating an "alternative canon," which I understand that is anyway quite difficult from this perspective (untranslated Portuguese comics from small, "alternative" presses), I want to discuss the intersection of trauma studies, comics' representation, and politics around one of the many blind spots in comics scholarship in general.

To an extent, I am not looking for a reified use of a certain nomenclature ("trauma," "traumatic," etc.), applying it to the selected comics texts, as if it those words were already clearly understandable concepts with well-defined characteristics, immediate formulations and structures, and so on. I do realize that the spectrum of experiences represented or addressed by these comics are not psychologically overwhelming, but they might be illuminated by the instruments developed within critical trauma theory. This is not an issue of moral relativism, but rather hopefully the extension of Caruth's vision that "in a catastrophic age, trauma itself may provide the very link between cultures" (1995: 11).

Chapter Two.

A Contextualization of Comics in Portugal.

A question of method..

I will not argue for any specific *definition* of comics that would guide our historical narrative.[14] Broadly speaking, I am less interested in assuming one particular theory that would then be applied to comics, than draw from multiple sources in order to *think with* comics. Contemporarily speaking, comics are both a mass medium and a niche culture. They constitute a specific art form, which, *qua* art form, can take multiple shapes and even spaces of expression, from personally traded fanzines to graphic novels integrated in national education programs, from small press, riso-printed, sold-in-concerts minicomics to art gallery-presented works, from obscure books that don't look much like comics to *tankonbons* printed in seven figure print runs with intermedial derived products. If we look at them from a specific perspective, we can pry away from it a "visual language" (Cf. Neil Cohn 2013) that may be used within this specific art form, or elsewhere, in publicity or political propaganda.[15] It is, sometimes, a mode of communication, but also a narrative form, which does not exclude the possibility of an anti-narrative approach, as we will see. And it could also be described according to an adapted "apparatus theory" (à la Baudry), taking in account its own specific *dispositifs*, albeit its ahistoricity and disembodiment has met its critics. Moreover, one has to consider each particular text as part of a complex constellation, as "parts of continually reconfigured media networks or dynamic cultural

14

While I do not believe it possible to come up with a closed number of necessary and sufficient elements, I do believe, on the other hand, following the steps of Noël Carroll (1998), in the pertinence of an historical description that takes in account contextual changes, internal transformations, authors' and works' dialogues, and so on. See also P. Lefèvre and Ch. Dierick's "Introduction" to *Forging a New Medium* (1998).

[15] Neil Cohn's research aims to separate the actual linguistic-like visual structures that are used by comics, such as image sequencing and information-building via images, but he sees "comics" in themselves as a particular social-historical product, that uses that "language." However, this may become complicated and it is, anyway, against a certain perception of comics as that very same language. For instances, if a propaganda poster uses "the visual language of comics," but it is not comics, what happens when we have "propaganda comics"? See Murray 2000.

series" (Baetens-Surdiacourt: 348-349). Beyond being a hybrid art form (Levinson 1984; in direct connection to comics, see Meskin 2009)[16] comics are a complex medium under whichever perspective it is considered.

There are many modes of creating comics. And we will find in this dissertation many forms of comics, whether concerning creative processes or publishing formats. We can have a series of paper sheets drawn with a grid, making up panels, some of which are regular rectangles, and others irregular shapes. Inside these panels we will find often drawings. These represent characters or spaces, those others are only filled with letters, or symbols or textures that, even though may seem *illegible* individually, are part of a larger structure that is actually figurative and obvious. Some comics are black-and-white; some in colour. Some have text, verbal matter, some don't. Some pages reveal corrections, accidents, ink blots, dirty spots, white-out, scotch tape, while others seem to have been done by a master miniaturist. This seemingly anomic diversity can be branded with one name, *comics*, even though such a word can elicit childhood memories, or what may seem light, brief and uncomplicated acts of reading.

Despite the exponential and fantastic growth of Comic Studies within the last few years, there are still many national traditions that are fairly unknown outside their national borders.[17] Although there are some efforts in creating resources to create a *translational*

[16] To the hypothetical question, "what is the matter of expression of comics?," it would not be possible to answer with one single view: narrativity, sequentiality, ellipsis, a vigorous graphical gesture, and so on, are all part of that matter in flux. Perhaps this is oversimplifying, but this perspective - that of comics' hybrid nature - can be seen as an attempt of categorizing it, and not at all as an essentialist definition or a value judgment (which is perhaps what leads Meskin to start his article with "Not all comics are art," allowing other "usages" for comics). This, or so it seems to me, is what allows us to understand comics as a historical, but also logical and ideological, combination of previous forms and practices, and especially of images (and more, a "sequence" of images) and text (rather in its wider semiotic and cultural studies sense, as discourse, narrative, meaning production and so on), although we cannot forget its multimodality (refs. David Herman, Dale Jacobs), multisensoriality (Marco Pellitteri, Hague) and materiality (Baetens, Emma Tinker, Chute). Ever since its first purported theorizer, Rodolphe Töpffer, seen within certain circles as the inventor of comics' *tout court* (see Th. Groensteen and B. Peeters, 1994, and D. Kunzle: 2007), that the notion of comics' construction is seen according to those terms: "The drawings, without the text, won't have more than an obscure meaning; the text, without the drawings, won't mean anything" ("Notice sur l'Histoire de Mr Jabot," *Bibliothèque universelle de Genève*, apud Groensteen and Peeters 1994). If, in analytical terms, that operation allows us to test the applicability of a whole series of tools developed and validated in other areas (from narratology and iconology to film studies, etc.) on comics, it also can act as an obstacle, a screen against its autonomous appreciation, and a failure in acknowledging its own particular history, crises, developments and ontology. Its components, however, do remain discreet to a certain extent, which allows for very specific analyses, which have reached a level of significant sophistication within Comics Studies.

[17] Cultural studies have, of course, created obstacles to consider the "nation" as a transparent, uncomplicated notion, by bringing to the front not only its "imaginative identification" as well as the multitude of "systems of representation" that act both within and upon it.

space for comics, via monographs (e.g. José Alaniz' *Komiks: Comic Art in Russia* or Fredrik Strömberg's *Swedish Comics History*), specific articles on countries (such as the ones regularly produced by a team of scholars for *IJOCA*) or comics anthologies translated into languages with wider access such as English or French (as Hard Comic's anthology of Romanian comics, *The Book of George,* Top Shelf's two-volume *From the Shadow of Northern Lights*, etc.), there is still the notion that some countries are *central* in comics production (typically, France, Japan, and the U.S.), in relation to which all other countries are somewhat *peripheral*. It comes as no surprise then, that the presence of peripheral traditions of comics in more centred stages only happen once in a while and end up diluted into the circumstances in which they're organised.

Let's take the example precisely of Portuguese comics. One may find small press publications or festival catalogues that focus on a particular country, so that when Portugal was the guest country at Angoulême in 1998, a catalogue was published, *Perdidos no Oceano*. That same year, Amok's *Le cheval sans tête* no. 5 included Portuguese authors in a thematic issue; a few years before, Alain Corbel coordinated two projects with a few Portuguese authors, *Pelume Amére* ("L'encre du polvo," 1994) and *Porto Luna* (Amok, 1995), and later on, the same kind of projects took place with the Swiss magazine *Strapazin* no. 70 (2003) and the Latvian *Š!* no. 20 (2015). All of them differed greatly, as the Angoulême catalogue catered to the interests of Portuguese commercial publishers, necessarily and correctly, while all the others had stricter aesthetic agendas and/or were born out of personal relationships between authors (Corbel lived in Lisbon, Filipe Abranches shared a studio with Vincent Fortemps in Brussels for a while, etc.). However, all of these efforts did not remain in time and changed little in the openness of the Francophone market for the possibility of translating and publishing Portuguese comics, and neither they became integrated in a particular differentiated way in general assessments (see Gaumer 2002: 152-161, Beaty 2008: 126 ff.[18]).

However, what does that "peripheral nature" reveal? Does it mean that comics productions from these other countries are somewhat derivative of the self-appointed centres? Does it mean that there is a lack of sophistication or aesthetical value (however we consider such words) that prevents them to become integrated into a wider market? Surely, if there is room for artists such as Jason and Rutu Modan, Arne Bellstorf and Ulli Lust,

[18] Patrick Gaumer, *La BD. Guide Totem*. n.l.: Larousse 2002. As of course, we are not comparing in any way these assessments: while Gaumer's typical encyclopaedic treatment, inherited from Moliterni and co. leads to an undifferentiated grouping, Beaty's work is much more focused and presided by sound criteria in his choices (not to mention his short yet incisive analyses, of which there are none in Gaumer).

Fábio Moon and Gabriel Bá, Lorenzo Mattotti and Gabriella Giandelli, in the global comics stages then it must mean that that market is actually willing to translate good comics from peripheral traditions? So if something is *not* available, then it must lack the necessary qualities, surely? Unfortunately, as it has been acknowledged slowly lately, considerations on the "global" or even "European" comics field has lead to the creation of an erroneous view that any less known traditions constitute "more or less imperfect variations of that idealized [the Franco-Belgium *bande dessinée*, especially] model" (Baetens-Surdiacourt, "European Graphic Narratives": 347).

It's somewhat unavoidable to consider Portuguese comics without referring back to certain models, or centre production poles, which, as such, will be seen as the reference to which everything else is compared to. That centre becomes thus the *metropolis* for its related peripheries. That is how certain productions will surface as necessarily having an "exotic tinge," "cultural specificities," and so on. The characteristics of Portugal's comics market, defined by deficient production of both translated and new domestic titles, but a strong culture of small press and community networks, leads to a wide distribution or knowledge, by comics readers, of the most varied traditions of comics, namely French, Belgium, North American, Japanese, but also Italian, Spanish, German, Finnish, British, and so on. In fact, most Portuguese comics authors are quite knowledgeable on worldwide production of comics, and it's somewhat difficult to pin down any singular artist to a specific influence, seldom understood as constrained to a single author, language, country, genre or style. Without referring to, of course, influences from other realm of creativity, considering that some of the comics authors we will consider are also accomplished artists in the visual or performance arts, animation or music.

But the problem lies in the fact that broad presentations aim at finding a common trait on *all* Portuguese comics (this also happens in relation to any other sort of cultural or medium-specific production, from cinema to music) and will present them under that aegis. Contemporary tourist or official discourses, regardless of being historically anchored in slightly different socio-political values such as democracy, laicity and multiculturalism, will revert sometimes to guiding principles that are inherited from the old regime, which subsisted for 48 years, from 1926 to 1974. "Though the political program of the 'Estado Novo' may have become obsolete," write Mário Gomes and Jan Peuckert, "the symbols of national identity propagated for decades still subsist" (2010: 117). In this short article on comics artist Miguel Rocha, whom we'll study later, the two authors use precisely a series of

close-knitted clichés (their word) such as the feeling of *saudade*, melancholy, and the trilogy "Fátima, futebol, fado" (i.e., the sanctuary of Fátima, standing for the Catholic tradition, football, and Fado, the typical melancholic song from Lisbon and Coimbra, and which would become the "national" song throughout the Estado Novo) in order to understand how some contemporary comics authors negotiate such symbols, such heritage, through "aesthetic challenges," an "artistic task" of re-purposing such symbolism.

The article presents a fascinating close reading or Rocha's books, and I will come back to it. For now, I wish to focus on Gomes and Peuckert's broader assertions, with which I don't agree however. When they write that "there seems to be no such thing one could label a 'Portuguese comic tradition'" (117), the authors present a two-fold reason. The lack of a specific Portuguese word for this art form, against the Spanish "tebeos" and the Italian "fumetti," which would "stand as signposts for a national tradition," and also because it "has neither brought up any popular comic figures nor recognized comic artists" (idem). Now, each of these reasons deserves to be considered separately, if briefly, and I will do that presently. But considering that in the following paragraphs the authors shorten the history of comics in Portugal to a two-period structure - during the Estado Novo "used as a political instrument" and after April the 25th as a product for cultivated audiences -, with no mention to detailed publications, authors or channels of distribution, one is lead to believe that such a dichotomy is not sufficiently operational.

Let's engage in with the two factors. Any discussion basing itself on the naming words used *themselves*, without explaining their contextual usage or historical development is bound to run into trouble. The lack of a specifically Portuguese term should not account for much. Before the adoption of the Gallicism "banda desenhada",[19] the expression "histórias em quadradinhos" (lit. "stories in little squares") was used, and although less, is it still used today. The French word "bande dessinée" is in itself also an adaptation of the Anglo-American term "drawn strips," going back to the 1960s (L. Grove). "Tebeos," as a naturalized and grammaticalized form of an initialism, could only possibly be in usage after 1917 (the foundation of the magazine *TBO*), and currently most Spanish people will use the word "cómic," without signifying with that change a cut away from the old "tradition." Moreover, the Argentinians call their comics "historietas," and there is enough crossings of comics between Spain and Argentine to make us wonder if traditions are always clearly separated on national terms (the same could be said about a few Brazilian works in Portugal, not to mention the French-Belgium francophone transit). And even in English

[19] Quite certainly under the immense influence of the Portuguese magazine *Tintin*, after 1968.

language, as it is common in academic and even popular *milieus*, terms are constantly being debated, refined and disputed.[20]

As for the lack of "popular comic figures" and "recognized comic artists," it sounds somewhat like an *argumentum ad nauseam*: it has been repeated so often in Portugal that it sounds (it must be) true. However, if we add the qualificative phrase: "for whom?," things may change a little. If the answer to that hypothetical question is "foreign/ global audiences," then perhaps that would mean that there is no comics tradition in Russia, Serbia, Romania, South Korea, India, Indonesia, Peru, Thailand. But just because a certain national tradition is not known in more global stages, that does not erase them from history. In fact, it is rather revealing of unbalanced globalization processes. If the answer, on the other hand, is "domestic contemporary audiences," even though I would agree that there is a certain weakness of memory, or the lack of a permanent access to the historical patrimony, of comics,[21] with every successive generation, that problem is also true in a few other creative areas (in Portugal but also elsewhere), especially to non-specialised audiences. It is true that most people in their 20s and 30s, even if interested in comics as

[20] There are many discussions about this subject, entangled as they are with another *vexata quaestio*, that of the "definition." See Labio 2011.

[21] Only recently did comics, as a field, start to have organised, concrete publishing policies of the "recuperation of memory" of comics. If one can consider Denis Gifford's *Victorian Comics* (1975), Bill Blackbeard's The Hyperion Library of Classic American Comic Strips collection (several volumes, 1977), and the two Smithsonian anthologies (1977 and 1982) as important precursors, as well as the first steps of publishers like Fantagraphics, TwoMorrows and Pierre Horay, as an attempt in commercializing this memory, it would only be in the 1990s that this recuperation would become more sound and effective, entangled as it was with the emergence of graphic novels and the novel distribution of comics in non-specialised bookstores. But very diverse, as well. On the one hand, there was the integration of "classics" by certain artist-run publishers in order to create a tradition of which the artists themselves would become a part (say, L'Association with Francis Masse, Gébé and Edmond Baudoin, among others, Ego comme x with Jean Teulé, Frémok with the *Che* of Oesterheld and the Breccias, and Alex Barbier). On the other, commercial publishers soon found interest in now moneyed adults in buying *intégrales* of their childhood comics (e.g. *Tif et Tondu*, *Gil Jourdan*, etc.), or even beyond. In the U.S., integral collections became the rage as well: projects such as *Peanuts*, *Gasoline Alley*, *Dick Tracy*, *Moomin*, *Popeye* and *Krazy Kat* are but a few examples of very successful projects, commercially, editorially, critically and even where design is concerned. A study of the "dialogue between authors through design" in these gestures would be quite interesting (Seth in relation to Schulz, Chris Ware to Frank King and Herriman, Adrien Tomine to Tatsumi, etc). In Portugal, despite a wonderful collection published throughout the 1980s on Portuguese historical comics (mostly precisely from the Estado Novo decades), organized by Jorge Magalhães (for the now extinct Futura), was met with little commercial success. Today, only a handful of collections are significant in this aspect, such as Paiva Boléo's edited collection of Carvalhais' *Quim e Manecas* (Tinta da China). See Robert Fiore, "The Experience of Comics," *The Comics Journal* # 300, November 2009; especially pp. 252 ff. This revitalization of the past can be interpreted under a mediology perspective, as pointed out by A. Rajagopal: "Friedrich Kittler has argued that the sense of loss that haunts writing is erased by new media, that render the past into accessible presence. If new media make information 'want' to be free, they seem also to create pasts that 'want' to be restored" (2006: 283).

(non-meta) readers, are probably unaware of Carlos Botelho's outstanding output, or have never read Cottinelli Telmo's "A grande fita americana," or even know about Bordalo's *Rasilb* (more on these authors below). Then again, the same thing could be said about other areas, from erudite and popular music, early cinema, poetry and architecture.

Having said this, it is quite possible to say that it is true that Portuguese comics lacks the economical vigour and perseverance to "faire école" (as in "école de Marcinelle," "the Caniff school," "The Marvel house style(s)" and so on), but on the other hand it has an ongoing emergence of artists with distinctive, singular and vibrating styles. Such diversity empowers the artistic felicity of Portuguese comics. Instead of schools, and despite the many collaborations, co-joint efforts and even "creative families" throughout its history, Portuguese comics is mainly characterized by fully individualized values, or what Jorge de Sena, in a different context, called "dazzlements"[22].

So, all in all, perhaps the problem is precisely that of defining the peripheral production of Portugal according to metropolitan, central models, in some sort of cultural imperialism, imposing models from the outside. Although one cannot deny the utility of comparisons for the sake of clarity and make a new, unknown tradition more approachable, they should not be used to "drown" its specificities. If we herald the traditions of French or American, or even Italian comics, as a model, then we will not find, as a matter of fact, the same kinds of structures or examples in Portugal. However, to deem it as non-existent seems to fail in being sensitive to cultural, historical and economical specificities. In that sense, even though some international audiences may recognize the names of Amália Rodrigues or Siza Vieira, Manoel de Oliveira or Pedro Costa, we are clearly quite apart from "mass audiences," and in no sense that can be used as an argument that Portugal has no musical, cinematic or architectural traditions.

Europe does not have a "low cost of mobilization." That is to say, apart from costs of travelling spatially and physically, quite often certain costs of cultural, linguistic and social crossing con-substantiate an almost insurmountable obstacle. Ugo Pagano has referred to this reality as a "low horizontal cultural homogenization" (2004: 315). The cultural homogenization only operates within certain circles, those which can still be called, non-ironically, *popular* (which I don't think can be confused with that sociological notion of "the masses"). It is arguable what will be a part of those circuits or not, given the case

[22] This is from Sena's introduction to *A Literatura Inglesa: Ensaios de Interpretação e de História* ("English Literature: Essays of Interpretation and History"; Cotovia: 1989), where he is characterizing Portuguese literature in contrast to the several historical English "schools".

that they can be stratified, crossed over, combined or complicated due to cultural traffic and the wide range of individual experiences. But I think we can make educated guesses in slightly generalised fields. On the one hand, there's that widespread mainstream media-divulged, bourgeoisie-sustained, international, if not Americanised, culture, that is translated by the global consumption of largely American-based or -produced pop culture products - Beyoncé, *Transformers 3*, and *reality shows* (even if these are usually adapted to local specificities). Then we have those popular phenomena that are identical in all stages (local production, fast international broadcasting, using web-based channels, for instance, breaking in into central and famous international broadcasting platforms, whether MTV or book clubs, followed by, depending on the media, film adaptation, sequels, commodification of related products, etc.) but come from different countries than usual - good examples are Stieg Larsson's *Millenium* series, the novels of Sveva Modignani, the music of Tokio Hotel, and so on. On a usually more localised stage, each country will have its own (if we accept there is such a thing) middle- to lowbrow products that follow the same kind of media exposure and economic strategies, but are only consumed domestically. Portugal has its own references, of course, from anchorman-cum-novelist José Rodrigues dos Santos to romantic pop band Perfume. The configurations and limits of a purported cultural elite are as wide as they are porous, to be sure. But by belonging, or better still, by wishing to belong to such purported elites, the feeling of impossible compromise between those spheres is almost immediate. Even if a compromise of that sort is false, that is to say, politically, culturally and philosophically unsustainable, it will still act as if was feasible and creates a widespread illusion of integration.

So to which Europe does Portugal belong? How does Portugal responds to this homogenised Europe, or to any other image of Europe? Boaventura de Sousa Santos, in his book *Portugal. Ensaio contra a auto flagelação* (2011), comments thus: "There is no doubt that [Portugal's] integration in the European Union has changed dramatically Portuguese society and, in most of the cases, it was a positive change, a change for the better. However, I think that up until now those changes have been conceived less as a part of a well-thought project that has been adopted than as the auspicious results of new routines that have been imposed from without. It seems that Portugal is in the European project, but it is not the European project yet." And, further ahead, he adds that Portugal takes the role "of the guest, not that of the host" (2011: 52-53, my translation).

The sociological approach to literature of Jean-Marie Klinkenberg and Benoît Denis introduces the "gravitational theory," and I believe that many of the concepts discussed by them are quite appropriate in the realm of comics too. They do mention comics briefly (throughout, my translations; 2005: 37), but don't analyse them particularly. Under their perspective, comics may be understood as "weak institutions," in the sense of not being strongly coded and having less implicit rules (29-30), than literature *per se*. When Klinkenberg and Denis mention that "'small literatures' do not have the means to exist without a reference to the grander literature ensembles that are closest to them and to whose influence they have always been subjected" (24), it is not difficult to understand how such a marginal production such as the one discussed in the present project relates to more known poles of production, such as the North-American or the French markets, whether from the so-called mainstream or alternative circles from both zones (and elsewhere).

The notion of "World literature" becomes quite operational here. Franco Moretti bases himself on Immanuel Wallerstein's World-systems theory to construct his approach to literature, creating a framework that cannot be seen as a simple context but as the very condition of possibility of the literary productions. "The one-and-unequal literary system," he writes, "is not just an external network here, it doesn't remain *outside* the text: it's embedded well into its form" (2000: 66; original emphasis). Moretti is aware of the problems of creating an analytical category based on a given literature (usually "central") which then acts as the focus of search in a different production context. When he refers to the method of reading texts in order to search within them a "unit of analysis," which he actually explains as "reading through the text," a sort of dictum comes up: "The task is constrained from the start; it's a *reading without freedom*" (61, my emphasis). Looking for a Portuguese "Pekar" or "Satrapi," a "bd reportage" or a "*Maus*," then, would be incredibly constrained, or even more so: it would be fated *not* to find anything. Theo D'haen actually considers Franco Moretti's view of World literature "diffusionist and Eurocentric" (2012; p. 7), and in fact Moretti quotes Itamar Even-Zohar (from his 1990 essay "Laws of Literary Interference") explaining the notion o "interference" as "a relationship between literatures, whereby a... source literature may become a source of direct or indirect loans" (Moretti's ellipsis: apud 2000: 56). In such a negotiation, where the point of departure is always already to establish the models from the centres and then "apply" them to other literatures, it comes as no surprise that it will be, more often than not, a failed negotiation. D'haen points to the problem that certain literatures never had any chance of becoming popular or accessible within this system, especially when, in contemporary discussions, literature from

former "peripheral" points of the world, like African and South American countries, India or China, vie for a place in the sun, making it doubly difficult for literatures from countries now perceived as historically privileged but which actually never had a chance: "what has to give is what was never any getting to begin with, that is to say Europe's 'minor' literatures (...) If anything, this has led to an even growing marginalization, or perhaps we should say "peripheralisation," of Europe's minor literatures" (D'haen 2012: 6; also, D'haen 2011 and 2013).

As of course, displacing these considerations onto the realm of comics is something that one must do with the utmost care. First of all, D'haen refers to Belgium literature – already in itself a difficult construct, as it crosses linguistic divides – and he does not count Portuguese in the same category of "minor," especially taking in account the lusophone program, which seeks to associate itself with the Portuguese-language literatures not only of Portugal, but also Brazil, Angola, Mozambique and elsewhere. However, one cannot underline enough, comics is a wholly different affair. Comparisons can be made, then, for the sake of clarity, but we have to be wary that the inclusion of any given society in a transnational category must secure the specificity of that society's historical process (cf. Santos 1985: 873). This is precisely what I will try to do in this chapter.

Klinkenberg and Denis seem to use the adjective "minor" in relation to literature not in its commonsensical meaning (as Theo D'haen does most of the time), but rather in a Deleuzian-Guattarian sense, but we'll go back to that in a later section[23], for I do wish to use it, but just not on all Portuguese comics, of course. Only a particular group of texts will be open to that specific use. For now, let's accept that descriptive in terms of social life and quantity (print runs, circulation, critical and media reception). The gravitational character of the system refers to the both centrifugal and centripetal dynamics that are established in literature (and beyond), between the centre and the peripheries, which in turn leads to "think of the literary groupings in terms of tendency towards dependency [i.e., the "small literatures"] and independence [i.e., "great ensembles"] (2005: 35). Centripetal forces attract peripheral literature towards the centre, entailing their *assimilation*. Centrifugal forces, however, can lead those same groupings towards *differentiation* and *independence*, usually to that which may be called "emergent literature" (36). This literature reaches some degree of *autonomy*, which "manifests itself through its capacity to self-organize independently of

[23] In any case, they do refer to the "battery of terms" that could be used, whether taking in account size or its relationship to the "centre," terms such as "small literatures," or "dominated," "peripheral," "marginal" and so on (34). Jan Baetens also addresses this concept in 2008b, pp. 95-115, to which I will return later as well.

other social powers" (27). Comics production in Portugal, especially in independent labels and artists collectives, reveals exactly this independence, both editorial, political and financial, as we will see.

It is true that these agents, within the country, are less articulated with mainstream media outlets or with bigger comics-related institutions and companies (whether publishers or festivals, etc.), but they do relate to other congeneric bodies across Europe, in networks of cooperation that come up with counter-hegemonic forms of globalization. In fact, this last word cannot be seen as neutral, value-free, matter-of-fact notion (Rajagopal 2006: 279) that could fill the space left by the evacuated master narratives, and it is not followed by everyone according to the same principles and venues. Publishers such as the Portuguese Chili Com Carne, as well as the Finnish Kuti Kuti, the Italian Canicola, and the Slovenian Stripburger, among a few others provide English translations along the original text, more often than not in the shape of a footnote track. That is one way of providing a solution for the language hurdles between countries, and along with the festivals and meetings themselves, those strategies seem to create that which Gustavo Lins Ribeiro calls "social transfrontiers" which contribute to "translocal systems and translocal cultures" (2006: 247). Ribeiro is referring to actual places (specifically border cases like Ciudad Juárez and Foz do Iguaçu), so this usage is somewhat metaphorical, in the sense that this transit of authors and publications creates an alternative venue to the more conventional globalization of comics (usually, through publishing contracts between well-established publishers of several countries). Ribeiro explains that these locales "are often seen as spaces out of state control and, as a result, are negatively valued by authorities and the media as zones prone to illegal activities. Such spaces, thus, can easily be manipulated by different political and economic interests since they are liminal zones, hybrids that mix people, things and information from many different national origins, and reveal nation-States' fragilities" (240).[24] In a way, the sort of collaborations and exchanges that emerge from this (granted, within a number of Western European countries) is less merely *translational* than *transnational*, considering how these editorial processes and decisions seem to be, up to a certain point, co-coordinated or at least mutually informed. These publishers also look for the divulgation of politically charged authors, or artistic endeavours that are outside the norms of a more normalised perception of comics. In this sense, they do contribute to that which Charles Hatfield deems as a "new movement," whose main traits are

[24] Ribeiro is drawing from Victor Turner's concept of *liminality*, that points towards an unstable state.

> "the rejection of mainstream formulas; the exploration of (to comics) new genres, as well as the revival, at times ironic recasting, of genres long neglected; a diversification of graphic style; a budding internationalism, as cartoonists learned from other cultures and other traditions; and, especially, the exploration of searchingly personal and at times political themes." (Hatfield 2005: x)

Chili Com Carne is usually present in several international meetings such as the Luzern and Mälmo Festivals, or Crack! and Angoulême-Off, not to mention that, as a small publisher (although we can count a handful of people working for it, many of the tasks fall upon the editor, Marcos Farrajota), it shares many of the characteristics and affinities with some of the aforementioned publishers. CCC, as it is also known, was born in 1995 as an informal association of artists who created fanzines, but it would become a few years later a non-profit youth organization and a legally established publisher[25]. In average, CCC puts out 6 books per year, mostly national material but also international comics, as anthologies or monographs, especially from alternative or underground circles, including "maudits" such as Mike Diana. However, they also put out also novels, chronicles, essays, and illustration books in their catalogue. One of the titles in particular, *Boring Europa* (2011), depicts an European tour, by van, of a small group of Portuguese artists, stopping at a handful of European cities, from Valencia to Ljubljana, and putting up a small publication fair, presenting a DJ set and other actions, taking advantage precisely of this informal network. To a certain extent, this confirms how "peripheral agents" sometimes "de-nationalize" themselves, and are attracted to the mainstream centre, albeit in an alternative network (Klinkenberg-Denis 2005: 31-32). One could argue, however, that these are strategies that share, if in a smaller scale, the same goals as larger, more institutionalized bodies: "The contemporary comic book field, especially in its alternative wing, embodies a curious mix of values, a blend of counter-cultural iconoclasm, rapacious consumerism, and learned connoisseurship. It is a highly specialized if thinly populated consumer culture, one that holds tightly to a romanticized position of marginally and yet courts wider recognition" (Hatfield 2005: xii).

One way to overcome the centre-periphery dichotomy is to engage with the concept of *semiperiphery*. Even though he did not coin this notion, Portuguese sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos would develop it theoretically, and in particular in regard to Portugal in an influential 1985 article, entitled "Estado e sociedade na semiperiferia do sistema mundial: o caso português" ["State and society in the semiperiphery of the global

[25] In 2000 a sister-project, Mmmnnnrrrg, would be founded but we will consider them together (see below).

system: the Portuguese case-study"]. I will draw heavily from it in the following paragraphs, as I will also draw a social, political and economic portrait of the country, believing this to be important in order to understand the context of the comics I'll engage with.

Portugal seems to fail into being integrated on both more usual descriptors such as First/Third World, developed/developing countries, and some such nomenclatures. Following social indicators such as the relationship between capital and labour force, or that between the State and civil society, social classes, stratification and statistics, social patterns of social reproduction, and so on, and applying them to Portugal will provide elements that would allow one to both consider it as part of the First World or the Third World, depending on the perspective or the actual used indicators. Santos proposes to engage with the term "semiperipheral". He traces the origin of this term to Immanuel Wallerstein (in *The Politics of the World*-Economy, 1984), but not only he engages with it sociologically (and not merely as a metaphorical translation into the world of literature) as he also immediately criticizes its limited use, considering it *descriptive* (with not enough sufficient theoretical traction), *vague* (for both the criteria and the poles to which it is contrasted, i.e. "periphery" and "centre," are insufficiently defined) and also, or more importantly, *negative*, "in the sense that the traits found in semiperipheral States and societies are not based in a materiality of their own, nor do they possess a specific logic of evolution, and end up being rather a mishmash of traits applicable to both central and peripheral States and societies" (Santos 1985: 870, my transl., throughout). In this text, Boaventura Sousa Santos engages in a long, detailed and almost exhaustive analysis of hard data and historical developments in order to transform the term in a sounder theoretical notion, against which Portugal comes up as a good example. It is impossible for us to go into any detail here, so let us point out the two fundamental characteristics of contemporary Portugal[26]: first of all, the "lack of coincidence between social relations of capitalist production and the social relations of reproduction" and secondly, "the internal lack of articulation of each of these relationships" (idem: 871 ff.).

The first characteristic is related to the fact that the development level of the social relations of capitalist production is lower or more backwards than that of social reproduction, i.e., the production of life (workers) that will integrate the production

[26] The essay is dated 1985, but despite the radical changes operated in the last decades (European Union integration, followed by the Euro, the cultural openness granted by events such as Lisbon'94 European Capital of Culture, the World Expo 98, and so on), with the recent global financial crisis, and the specific tensions within Europe, many of the illusory developments of the late 80s and 90s vanished. Santos, as well as numerous other critics, have repeated these traits.

process of goods and services. According to Tithi Bhattacharya, in an article explaining social reproduction theory, "[l]abour power, in the main, is reproduced by three interconnected processes": all those activities that *regenerate* the worker him- or herself out of the job sphere (food, sleep, habitation, health, other types of care), those that take care of the non-worker but that are either future workers (children, especially) or past (the retired, the disabled, the unemployed, and so on), and those that "reproduc[e] *fresh workers*, meaning childbirth" (Bhattacharya 2013: n.p.). These are activities that take place not only on a daily basis, but also cross-generationally, maintaining and changing society, and includes "the development and the transmission of knowledge, social values, and cultural practices and the construction of individual and collective identities" (Bezanson and Luxton 2006: 3).

The examples underlined by the Portuguese sociologist are as follows: an industry particularly centred in traditional sectors that are undervalued today and whose global market competition level is low; low productivity levels, in average; low wages; a public sector that is modernized but hampered (by legalities, taxes, etc.); an heterogeneous bourgeoisie contrasting a very small number of modern sectors against a wider backwards-looking sector, with stagnant productivity and whose competitiveness is based on low wages; an equally heterogeneous labour force that more often than not suffers from lack of collective memory where pressure and negotiation of labour conditions and salaries are concerned, and fragmented along other non-capitalist production forms (a particular attention is paid to the still existent small subsistence farming, or parallel economic transactions[27]); among others (Santos 1985: 876). Due to the maintenance of strong bonds with small, subsistence agriculture of many social sectors of Portuguese society, Santos writes "the capital/labour relationship is therefore criss-crossed by a network of relationships that stem from social practices and ideologies imbued by non-capitalist logics of action, which bolster an internal fragmentation or atomization of the proletariat, as well as, to a certain extent, the bourgeoisie" (idem: 882). Bhattacharya also adds that "the major functions of reproducing the working class take place outside the workplace" (2013: n.p.), and it is not uncommon for working adults to have help from the retired parents, for instance, whether monetary-wise or with time and domestic tasks. To Sousa Santos, this

[27] In Portuguese, one other term for this is "subterranean economy," which can mean something as simple as *not* asking for a receipt in any given transaction, allowing for the provider not to declare it, and in some sectors this also means that the client does not pay VAT. Both are illegal, of course. This may play a part in some of the texts we will discuss, considering they are sold and distributed outside any capitalist structure, when not traded.

has blatant consequences on the relative stable, non-conflictive relationship between social sectors, which as a result plays a role in the general conservative nature of Portuguese society.

The second characteristic, that of "internal dis-articulation," consists on the discrepancy between the juridical and institutional framework of the social relationships (whether capitalist production or reproduction) and the social practices into which they are translated. As a semi-industrial country, with grave problems of modernization and productivity, a certain laxity of the State only adds more problems, especially where the application of justice is concerned, and which the successive economic recessions, including transnational crises that have hit Portugal hard only worsened (887).

Even within such a specific portrait, and despite the many efforts of legitimation of comics (see Groensteen 2006 and Éric 1994), both domestically and, more successfully, abroad, we must consider Portuguese contemporary comics not as "marginal," as we propose to use here the term "semi-peripheral" in the same charged political sense used by Santos... They are semi-peripheral, and in fact an almost residual production of a semi-peripheral literature of a semi-peripheral European country. Therefore, it may struck as odd to consider it as a reflection with any political importance. Albeit comics are always already a part of the "public sphere," it seems that most of its production, in Portugal and historically, aimed at a sort of calm social and political consensus. The words Terry Eagleton wrote about British eighteenth century literature seem to be applicable here: "The literary is the vanishing point of the political, its dissolution and reconstitution into polite letters" (2005: 25). "Polite letters" (and images) could well be a description of most comics productions throughout the 20th century, even globally speaking.

Of course, there were always comics or comics-related production with more or less overtly political tones, and explicit discussions or depictions of political issues, crises, or even theories and philosophies. We just need to be reminded of *Les Pieds Nickelés* and Frans Masereel's books, Harold Gray's *Little Orphan Annie* and Ditko's *Mr. A*, or considering magazines such as the American *The Masses* or work by the Neue Sachlichkeit artists. But the internal diversity of graphic storytelling, which, arguably, reached an apex around the mid-1990s allowed for new ways of working that exponentiated that relationship. For instance, the emergence, acceptance and critical reception of comics in reportage, documentary or essay forms, or comics which develop work that would address

the "Other" not as an object seen from without, but engaging with the "Other-as-subject," with his or her own voice (Moura 2012a).

In a 1996 catalogue from the then newly founded French publisher Amok, we find words that sound like a manifesto: "La profonde nostalgie de l'enfance qui occupe encore très largement la production de bandes dessinées condamne son efficience face au monde actuel et la cantonne à la périphérie des enjeux contemporains.

"La démarche d'AMOK entend bien, pour sa part, se situer au coeur d'une confrontation créatrice avec le réel." The authors I will study are quite conscious, precisely, of their "creative confrontation with the real." How does this confrontation takes place? Comics are mainly constituted by a corpus of *published* work, meaning texts that penetrate and circulate in the public sphere. All of them arrive to that precious and precise "public use of reason" which Kant discusses in *Beantwortung der Frage: Was its Aufklärung?* (1784). Instead of something close to what is usually called "public opinion" (a normative pronouncement of which not all individuals in one given society are the subjects, and that both contributes to social control and therefore entails the emergence of a new "tutelage"), it is a use that, according to Maurizio Borghi (who discusses Kant's text) assumes a truthful pedagogical (*paideia*) role that will contribute towards the emancipation of human beings (Borghi 2005-2006). Witnessing, reportage, voice (re)claiming, or resistance to hegemonic discourses are all an integrant and fundamental part of this public sphere, even if we are within a media ecology and a genre economy that does not always allow comics to share the same cultural and critical reception space of other expressive and artistic languages and disciplines (again, cf. Groensteen 2006 and Maigret 2012) This has changed significantly in the past decade, both in the United States and in some European countries, whether due to the presence of comics in the review pages of newspapers, or due to the organization of exhibitions in major visual arts institutions, the attribution of literary awards to graphic novels, not to mention the proliferation of academic assessment.

As should be expected, within that public sphere we will always find works that are dissimilar; some will uphold hegemonic discourses while others will act contrarily to them. However, we also must consider that hegemony generates less *marginality* than *centrality*, and that those margins must be seen as "approximate categories, not absolutes" (my translation; Cabral 2000: 883-890,). Mark McKinney, addressing a judicious group of comics-production (French-speaking *bande dessinées* by contemporary French-Arab authors), speaks of an "alternative public sphere, in which history is debated and political

positions are staked out" (2008: 162). The works I wish to discuss will fall somewhat within a similar category.

As I've already mentioned, I will not be arguing that comics are better equipped *than* any other art form to convey a certain theme or feeling, or address a certain issue. Creating interartistic hierarchies is somewhat silly, despite social perceptions. As Noël Carroll concludes one of his texts, "the relevant issue when commending a given artwork is not whether it is an instance of the medium that is best for the effect the artwork exemplifies, but whether the artwork in question achieves its own ends" (1984: 15).

To a certain extent, then, I wish to engage here with a "radical contextuality" in Lawrence Grossberg's sense (from *Bringing it All Back Home*), that is to say, "the way that cultural studies investigations work across historical and political contexts rather than taking up a fixed theoretical position. In these terms, 'context is not merely the background but the very conditions of possibility of something'" (the inside quote is Grossberg's, apud Harding and Pribram 2009: 3). It acknowledges that contexts operate in specific ways but also change constantly. In that sense, an understanding of the "Portuguese comics scene," embedded in the country's particular history, is necessary. I will start with an extremely brief overview of its history, but will get into more detail as we approach the context in which the authors I will address in the present dissertation emerged, as readers *and* as agents.

I am aware of the fact that creating any story based on "nationality" - in this case, a belonging, imagined or official, to a specific legal construct called *Portugal* and a unity projected by a common language and cultural distribution networks - leads always necessarily to subjective, partial perspectives. That is an inherent trait of human memory, whether individual or collective. "Like personal memory, social memory is also highly selective, it highlights and foregrounds, imposes beginnings, middles and ends on the random and contingent. Equally, it foreshortens, silences, disavows, forgets and elides many episodes which - from another perspective - could be the start of a different narrative" (Hall 1999: 5, see also Confino 1997). The creation of an idea of heritage - "Portuguese comics" - always leads to a more or less conventional, consensual group of authors, titles and attitudes, as well as a notion of much stronger bonds between the texts than the ones that can be warranted, eliding discrepancies, paying little attention to highly individualised traits, as if in fact it was one big, happy family, relating to "one of those things which everyone possesses, and which everyone will defend, seemingly without

thought" (Turnbridge and Ashworth, apud Harvey 2001: 322, nt. 12). Hall also throws light on the fact that the notion of nationality, or nation-belonging "was always fissured along class, gender and regional lines" (Hall 1999: 6). As we shall see, by not engaging with the usual normative narrative conventions of commercial comics, even though they may *use* them critically, the central authors of this dissertation create an alternative space for the vocalization of the dispossessed, but also create an alternative view of Portuguese comics, if not of comics themselves.

Although ideology is always pervasive and constitutive of subjects, if there is a difference between historical, classical productions and these contemporary authors I want to study is the latter's conscience of their intervention role. Instead of the hegemonic "business as usual" adventures of heroes upholding the current ideologies of the day, these authors, or most of them, focus on the livelihood of ordinary citizens, if not unremarkable ones. However, by focusing on such characters, and by showing how they are marginalised by hegemonic discourses, they are going against the grain not only where comics are concerned - its supposed entertaining or uplifting societal role - but also in relation to discourses of citizenship "role models". Thus, these texts also shape history, if even on the margins of the *grandes récits*, and this becomes particular acute in relation to books that do address History (such as Miguel Rocha's). To be sure, I have no wish to play this particular group of artists against a monolithically presentation of past authors. Less than an artificial opposition, we must be aware of the ongoing negotiations between tradition and experimentalism, prolongation of languages and styles and formal and political originality. Nothing is ever clear cut about being in one side or the other. When quoting extensively from John Bodnar's *Remaking America: public memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century*, and closely analysing his words and cases, Alon Confino points out that sort of simplifying dichotomy - "Official culture relies on 'dogmatic formalism' and the restatement of reality in ideal rather than complex or ambiguous terms" and "Defenders of [vernacular] cultures are numerous and intent on protecting values and restating views of reality derived from first-hand experience in small-scale communities rather than the 'imagined' communities of a large nation…" (Confino 1997: 1401) - in order to criticize it, concluding, "Not only is vernacular memory not as saintly and official memory not as brutal, but they constantly commingle" (idem: 1402).

In fact, one must avoid falling into the trap of either "excessive polemical dispute" or "commemorative activity" (my translation; Frey 2002: 301) of the past, but actively and

intellectually engage with the works themselves, in their own context, and try to understand the role they play. But in this way, by engaging with *alternative* (more on this word later) artists and texts, I hope to avoid "..defining heritage almost completely along the lines of economic commodification (...) one-dimensionally, as just another aspect of a burgeoning leisure industry (Harvey: 324; see also Baetens 2010).

A short history of Portuguese comics. From its origins to the early 20th century.

Knowledge of Portuguese comics in more accessed languages such as English or French is episodic, lacunar, and sometimes erroneous.[28] However, there are many efforts in Portuguese scholarship in creating whether global assessments or particular histories dedicated to particular times periods, titles or authors, written for exhibitions on themes, authors or commemorative dates. In this section we will draw much information from researchers such as António Dias de Deus, Leonardo De Sá, João Paiva Boléo, Carlos Bandeiras Pinheiro and Carlos Pessoa, among a few others. In a three-part article, Pierre Huard's establishes a typology of comics research (Huard 1998-99, see also Chavanne 1998), in which he proposes a classification of *discourses*, which has to do with the nature of the work itself, and its relationship to the object of study, and of *approaches*, or the methodological tools employed. The discourses are divided into three main areas, the first encompassing the "technical," the "socio-economic" and the "encyclopedic," and the other two being the "archivist" and the "critical." These discourses are then crossed with a number of "approaches," which Huard identifies and classifies as biographical, literary, encyclopedic, anthological, historical, sociological, socio-historical/ideological, socio-economic, technical, pedagogical, philosophical, semiotic, psychoanalytical, epistemological and art-critical. Most of the aforementioned bibliography of Portuguese comics fits nicely with the so-called "archivist" approach, where "l'auteur de bande dessinée est en fait le véritable objet d'étude, parfois au détriment de la BD elle-même. Il s'agit en fait d'un travail de sacralisation de l'auteur" (Huard 1998-99). It is, undoubtedly, important to acknowledge the importance of this precursor work, with its exhaustive take on titles, source identification, precise dates and data, opening up the field for further incursions, but it is very important to understand that rarely do they make up an actually critical discourse, which should be based on a wider historical context and follow disciplinary boundaries. Even the aggregation of these historical studies still leaves some parts of Portuguese comics' production unattended (cf. Matos 2011).

[28] We are referring to historical, contextual presentations and not the closer readings of any specific works, which are usually well-defined, clear and pertinent.

If we would rummage through history from a merely aesthetical point of view, looking for any sort of sequence of images or visual art techniques that we would compare with modern comics, finding any instance that we would then call "comics" *avant la lettre,* or "proto-comics," or that at least we could integrate in an unhistorical account of this territory, perhaps we could go back to the 18th century *azulejos* (tiles) of Sr. Roubado, in Odivelas, just outside Lisbon, a series of panels that depicts a crime-and-punishment story from the time of the Inquisition. Or, perhaps, flexing nationalistic linguistic muscles, include the several 13th century codices of the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* illuminated manuscripts, of Alfonso El Sabio, written in Galician-Portuguese, and sharing with modern comics many of its formal techniques and procedures (Alexandre-Bidon 1996). We could even go further back, to the Upper Paleolithic, in order to include the ca. 20 000 BCE engravings of Foz Côa, in Northern East Portugal.

However, such derailed exercises would not lead us in a good comprehension of the actual social, cultural and economic conditions of the contemporary comics scene in which our authors work. Comics, after all, are neither "unchanging" (to remind one of Alan Gowans' classic *The Unchanging Arts*) nor "post-historical" (see Carrier 2000, especially Chapter 7). Considering comics as a social-cultural artefact, imbibed in history, and in a transnational creative process, we will be considering Portuguese comics to have originated and evolved within the 19th century matrix of urban, middle-class, mass-marketed press.[29] There are many examples of short cartoons and "strips" being published in several newspapers and magazines throughout the decades of the 1850s to the 1880s, with names such as Nogueira da Silva, Flora (a possible pseudonym of Silva), Figueiras and Manuel José Ferreira, and others. However, as in most countries, there is always one particular name that becomes highly prized and heralded as the "patron" or "father" of its national tradition (such as Töpffer, Doré, Christophe, Wilhelm Busch, Pehr Nordquist, Frederik Von Dardel, A.B. Frost or R. F. Outcault)[30].

[29] In this, we are both following the pioneering work of David Kunzle (1973 and 1990), as well as further developments by Thierry Smolderen, Pascal Lefèvre and Charles Dierick, Thierry Groensteen and Benoît Peeters, Jared Gardner, and wonderful blogs such as *Andy's Early Comics Archive*, *Yesterday's Papers*, *Coconino's Classics* and others. In Portugal, the main people who have worked on this subject are António Dias de Deus and Leonardo De Sá (1997) and João Paiva Boléo and Carlos Bandeiras Pinheiro (1997 and 2000).

[30] However, more and more work has been produced that not only points to a quite complex history of "inventions" and "influences," as it also supports the thesis that Töpffer may have, in fact, been a decisive factor in the development of "modern" comics, a common root. See Groensteen-Peeters 1994, Kunzle 2007 and Groensteen 2014 (especially chapter 4, pp. 64 and ff.)

In Portugal, that figure is that of Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro (1846-1905)[31] and even if he was not technically the first author of modern comics in Portugal, there is no doubt that he occupies its tutelary role, not only for the sheer quantity of graphic and editorial work (not to mention his also overwhelming output as painter, ceramist, decorative artist and, to a certain extent, polemicist), but its quality, verve and the survival of many of his creations. One only has to mention the creation of his "Zé Povinho," a character that despite representing originally a specific class of uneducated, underprivileged *paisanos*, quickly became a type to represent all Portuguese people, somewhat like "John Bull" or "Uncle Sam," but always in a self-deprecating, "woe is me!" manner. Indeed, Bordalo's role in the shaping of an iconic cultural, collective Portuguese imaginary puts him in the same creative category than, for instances, Rowlandson and Gillray in England, Honoré Daumier in France, or Thomas Nast in America.[32] And, as them, much of his images would become models for decades to come. Apart from caricature and one-panel cartoons, he also did some one to two-page narratives in the many publications in which he participated, some of which he was the director. He worked in a myriad of publications (more often than not, weekly 8-page periodicals), in both Portugal and Brazil, some of which he was the director, but always being the most famous name and the heart that would colour the title. Only in 1870, for instance, he launched three different titles, *O Calcanhar de Aquiles*, *A Berlinda* and *O Binóculo*. Others would follow, being perhaps the most important ones *A Lanterna Mágica* (1875), *O Besouro* (1878), *O António Maria* (1879) and *A Paródia* (1900). Some of them were exclusively filled with caricatures.

Although his strictly comics output was rather small (by comics we will understand, rather conservatively, any sequence of images that creates a narrative, with some sort of causality and/or recurrent characters), the ones he did are enough to consider him to be a pioneer of comics in Europe[33], including some pieces that could be called autobiographical. One of his sequences, entitled "Diario d'um gommoso/conto movimentado" ("Diary of a toff/a thrilling short story," published in 1893), seems to be quite informed by Cham's style, or other French authors of the period, for its quick, minimal line work. But the

[31] Also found as "Raphael Bordallo," to follow its 19th century spelling.

[32] In the case of Zé Povinho and Bordalo, however, there are no doubts about the paternity of the character. There are many books on both his work and oeuvre. A still wonderful introduction is the culture historian José-Augusto França's *Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro* (1981), while a more visual, modern approach is found on João Paulo Cotrim's *Fotobiografia* (2005).

[33] In fact, his name is included in BNF's *Maîtres de la bande dessinée européenne* exhibition, and respective catalogue (Groensteen 2000). He is the sole Portuguese in this exhibition.

physical and moral expressivity of the characters and its sheer visual lavishness is somewhat related to theatre art. But the most important thing he did in this field is, undoubtedly, the very first comics album in Portugal: *Apontamentos de Raphael Bordallo Pinheiro Sobre a Picaresca Viagem do Imperador de Rasilb pela Europa* (translatable as "Notes By Raphael Bordallo Pinheiro on the Picaresque European Tour of the Emperor of Razilb," being the last a simple anagram of *Brazil*), which had successive three editions in its debut year, 1872. Despite containing no more than 16 pages, this was a true precursor of the European-style *álbum*, which would have an intense live throughout the 20th century. Having as its main purpose satirizing the Emperor of Brazil, D. Pedro II, it is a book filled with wonderful, innovative graphic solutions, some of which akin to European artists such as Töpffer, Cham and Busch (one other Bordalo 1878 piece heralds the note "Loose imitation of Busch") and, above all, Gustave Doré (there are actually a couple of "processes" than seem to be an homage, if not a rip-off, from solutions of Doré's 1854 *L'Histoire de la Sainte Russie*; see Moura 2010). He used blacked-out panels, children's drawings (Groensteen 2003; this could open a discussion about "l'hybridation graphique," that is to say, the diversity of styles within a single work, cf. Smolderen 2014 and Groensteen 2014b), and, I believe originally, a parenthesis, opening up an excursus to the main storyline.

After Bordalo, many other artists would follow his steps, including his own son, Manuel Gustavo, who contributed to the children's comics magazine *O Gafanhoto* (1903-1910), but never reaching the level of recognition (or creativity) of his father. This last publication published some translations of foreign comics, including that of Winsor McCay. With the end of Portuguese monarchy and its change into a Republic,[34] there was also a change in the "usage" of comics socially, which from a social and political caricature-related art would become increasingly a narrative, entertainment medium for children, perhaps associated with the pedagogical policies devised and upheld by Republicanism. This does not mean that there was a complete absence of adult-oriented, political satire-tinted comics. Quite the contrary, and Leal da Câmara's or Silva Monteiro's names would suffice to satisfy that line of development.

The Emergence of the Estado Novo.

[34] In fact, a succession of unstable, short-lived governments. Up until 1926, when the May 28th military coup d'état implemented the beginning of a long-lived autocratic regime (until 1974), there were, to simplify, 45 Constitutional Governments, plus the 1910 Provisional one, with more than 50 changes in chiefs of government (including collective juntas).

Starting around the 1910s and prolonging into the early 1930s, but with some authors extending their work well into the early 1940s, or even 1950s, a profound transformation of Portuguese comics occurred. One the one hand, there is an almost concerted, deliberate creation of children-oriented comics. On the other hand, the artists contemporary to the implementation of the Republic begin to shift their interest from political satirical comics (under Bordalo's aegis) towards a focus on social, quotidian life (Matos 2011).[35] But the new, brief generation that would be later called "Modernist" was comprised by people interested in working in many creative fronts as well as to diversify their visual approaches to illustration and comics, quite more stylised and streamlined that the previous generation, still following linework typical of the 19th century. In part, some of the style changes was accorded by the introduction of colour (even if limited to a second or third colour only) in the printed material, not only on the covers but also the interior pages of the publications. Almost none of the artists in this generation worked exclusively in comics production. Just as Bordalo had worked on ceramics and painting, we will find people here who were accomplished authors in other areas, from painting to architecture and film, as well as theatre setting, tile-painting, ceramics, caricature and illustration. There is a large number of important artists in this large family, and we can name Hypólito Collomb, Bernardo Marques, Margarida, Rocha Vieira, José Viana, Thomas "Tom" de Mello, José de Lemos, Guy Manuel and Sérgio Luiz (the last two siblings and often collaborators), as well as Almeida Negreiros and Júlio Resende, who would become absolutely central names in the history of painting in Portugal. Arguably, however, the artists that would become the paramount, quintessential references of this generation, especially although not exclusively for comics, are Bernardo Marques, Cottinelli Telmo, Emmérico Nunes, Carlos Botelho, Abel Manta and Stuart de Carvalhais (cf. Deus-De Sá 1997: 89 and ff.; Boléo-Pinheiro 1997 and Boléo-Pinheiro 2000).

With the advent of the military regime in 1926, followed by the institution and consolidation of the Estado Novo, things necessarily changed at all levels of society. In 1926, May the 8th, an antiparliamentary, military coup d'état ended the First Republic. The economy was in shambles, and in 1928 a professor of Economy from Coimbra was invited to become the Ministry of Finances. António de Oliveira Salazar managed to create what was dubbed a "financial miracle" by balancing the public budgets - which were never approved by the Parliament, as one would expect in democratic conditions - and stabilizing

[35] This does not mean that a strand of "political, critical and interventionist comics for adults" (my translation, Matos 2011: n.p.) is abandoned, as is precisely the point of Álvaro de Matos study on the publication *Os Ridículos* (1910-1926).

the Portuguese currency, the escudo, without international aid. As of course, today this "miracle" is seen as a self-propagating myth that was part of the budding regime's propaganda, as it was done through a brutal augmentation of every sort of taxes, budget cuts in health, and other public expenses. In any case, as the historian Fernando Rosas writes, "budget policies were not limited as merely financial techniques, but rather as tools for a wider project of State-building" (my translation; Rosas 2012: 51). Point in fact, this situation will allow Salazar to gain ever more power over the State, until in July 1932 he became the President of the Council of Ministers (equivalent to a contemporary Prime-Minister, still the Chief of Government in Portugal). This was the birth of what would be later dubbed the Estado Novo ("New State"), a regime guided under the auspices of a corporative system. In fact, as a "solution" against the many financial problems brought upon the first Republic, and its associated liberal capitalism, but also avoiding the core Marxist notion of class struggle, corporativism was the economic and social organization ideology: defending the State's intervention in economic matters, accepting capitalism, defending the social functions of propriety, labour and capital, but imposing social harmony between all sectors. According to another important historian of the regime, Jorge Pais de Sousa, one should avoid either inscribing the Estado Novo in a more traditional idea of *authoritarian* regimes, as influenced by American political sciences, or to consider it as a simple Portuguese variant of *Fascism*, as it was spreading across Europe in the 1920s and 1930s (2011). Pais de Sousa attempts to rise above this dichotomy of taxonomies that have typified historical discussions in the last decades by reusing a term coined by Miguel de Unamuno, who christened the Salazar's regime of as a "fascism ex cathedra".[36]

This regime would be characterised by its conservative, authoritarian, nationalistic, rural, and even anti-urban and anti-industrial nature. Historian João Medina, for instance, talks of a "regime of immobility, stemming from a Christian matrix, nostalgic for a medieval *pax ruris*, mistrustful of anything that may remind one of the modernity of the 1900s" (my translation, Medina 1993: 13). Despite the economic, societal and industrial changes that took place in the 1960s and 1970s,[37] the fact is one can consider that the 48

[36] Miguel de Unamuno used this expression among others, such as "university fascism" or "bellicose-scholastic dictatorship," in "Nueva vuelta a Portugal," a July, the 3rd 1935 piece from the newspaper *Ahora*, (apud Sousa 2011). Salazar, we should remember, was not only a cathedratic professor but had been a seminarian.

[37] Salazar left the government in 1968, after a accident with serious consequences on his mental abilities, but he would only die in 1970, still believing to be the President of the Council.

years that Portugal lived under a non-democratic regime was defined by a number of political processes. There were no parties, no political pluralism, and, more importantly for us, no free press.

Despite a certain flexibility assured by Gomes da Costa, the President after the 1926 coup, in that same year a "preliminary censorship" was instituted, which became increasingly more controlling, on both domestic productions as well as the importation of foreign material. In 1934, the Secretariat for National Propaganda (SPN, later SNI) was created.

This had an immediate repercussion in children's literature and, naturally, on comics as well, as the medium was considered, as elsewhere, an off-shoot (if not a bastardization) of literature for younger audiences. If some researchers (Rocha 1984, Araújo 2008) consider that the first few decades of the 20th century were the "golden period" of children's literature in Portugal, due to the literary efforts of intellectuals such as Aquilino Ribeiro or António Sérgio, both involved with several left-wing movements, but also such as the monarchic and anti-Salazar Afonso Lopes Vieira, among others, all of them agree that the institution of the Estado Novo in the early 1930s represented a weakening of liberties and qualities. Many of the newspapers exclusively dedicated to children, or their special supplements, are gone, and with them the opportunities for Portuguese authors. To a certain extent, the Mocidade Portuguesa-related[38] titles fill that void, but under the tight propaganda agenda of the regime. In 1950, the Direcção de Serviços da Censura ("Direction for Censorship Services") publishes the *Instruções sobre literatura infantil* ("Instructions on children's literature"), which "imposes general ethical, psychological and aesthetic guiding principles." These are somewhat analogous to the French *Loi n°49-956 du 16 juillet 1949 sur les publications destinées à la jeunesse* (see Crépin and Groensteen 1999) but it went further, especially into formal aspects, and it is worth to go into a little detail into this small - a booklet of a few dozen pages - but important document.

The surprising aspect of this law has not only to do with choices of social representation, morality and the encouragement of national pride, but with details on formal production. Where the first aspects were concerned, this lead to the redrawing - or the "butchering," depending on the perspective - of some panels from foreign material (sometimes national as well), eliminating guns from cowboys' or bandits' hands, "lowering"

[38] A regime-oriented youth movement, the Mocidade was created in 1936 and would only be dissolved in 1974. It was practically compulsory for children between 7 and 14 years of age, especially the male branch, although there was an active female branch as well.

female character's skirts, erasing anything shocking, or adapting into Portuguese versions the names of foreign heroes. So J. C. Murphy's *Big Ben Bolt* was known as *Luís Euripo*, M. Butterworth's and G. Campion's *Battler Briton* became *Major Alvega*, and A. Raymond's *Rip Kirby* became *Rúben Quirino*. This would lead also to the adaptations of places, institutions, etc., so it comes as no surprise that many of the young readers would actually think they were Portuguese-made. But the document also aimed to secure the "reader's visual hygiene"... Verbal text could only be written in black on white or *crème* backgrounds, text type and size was also allowed only according to strict rules, the sizes and thickness of border lines, the type of paper, and so on... there are even detailed, opinionated advices on the use of lightning and colours: "Green is less fatiguing, more fatiguing is red." Garish colours were out of the question. As I mentioned, these "instructions" were dedicated to all children's publications, but they affected comics as well, and there are a few specific mentions to the medium, cf. article 4, where there are precise instructions on the rectangular limits of the panels, the composition of captions, and so on. Simões Müller, the director of *Cavaleiro Andante*, was a member of the Commission that brought to light the *Instruções*, which complicates the common notion of considering certain editors, authors and other agents as being merely "people of their times." As in the case of Müller, they actively contributed to the characteristics of those times (Deus-De Sá 1999: 144 ff.).

To go back to the broader society, one also has to bear in mind that any kind of associative movements, strikes, or worker's unions were forbidden. Not only were rights and freedoms trampled, but the very possibility of rights-claiming was cut short: public meetings had to be authorized in advance (if ever) and any demonstration or protest would be violently repressed. A political police, the PVDE/PIDE played an important part in the pervasiveness of an ongoing repression, corroborated by a very large network of informers, which would install a long-lived, permanent feeling of fear to speak out loud some sentiments in relation to politics.

One has to comprehend then that comics' production throughout the Estado Novo, even though it may have not upheld all the political, oppressive policies of the Government, still had to work within the expected values, morale and principles of the regime. Most of them, in the midst of censorship, conformed to a certain model of representation of the nation, with its normative conveyed notions, and a curtailed view of what "healthier" and more socially accepted forms of comics for the younger generations

should be. Some of the previous, modernist authors continued to work, albeit conforming to the rules and standards of the time. A blatant example is Stuart de Carvalhais' "Quim e Manecas." This famous title is perfectly in the line of the "pair of mischievous tykes" tradition of *Max und Moritz*, *The Katzenjammer Kids*, *Zig et Puce*, *Quick & Flupke* and that would continue throughout the history of comics and its many nations. Its first scripts had been written by Acácio de Paiva, the director of *O Século Cómico*, where the strip debuted, and despite being about two little children, the way it dealt with quotidian life had strong political undertones, which made them quite appreciated by adults as well (Deus-De Sá 1999: 89). Under the Estado Novo, Stuart would continue the adventures of his characters in *Pajem*, a small-sized insert magazine of the larger comics journal *Cavaleiro Andante*, but in a somewhat tamed version, partially due to the insert's mission: *Pajem* was aimed at an audience younger than the main publication's (the titles play upon this, as one can guess, the insert playing "Page" to the "Knight"; cf. Deus-De Sá 1999: 224 ff.). Some of Stuart's stories in this magazine had the collaboration of its director, Adolfo Simões Müller, an extremely influential children's literature writer, editor and publisher, who created many works in the line of national exaltation and pride. And, as we have seen, a member of the Commission of the *Instruções*. Müller was also responsible for *O Papagaio*, another influential children's comics magazine, which published many ground-breaking Portuguese artists[39], and *Diabrete*, a cheaper magazine, but within the same general editorial lines.

Comics' history in Portugal, as in other European countries and the United States, has a close relationship with the newspaper industry, and only after the 1960s can we speak of a blossoming of a comics *book* industry, whether with the classical Franco-Belgian format of the series' *albums* (from the 1970s on) or the "graphic novel" one-shots (since the 1990s). Bordalo's magazines where in newsprint, and up until the 1960s magazines were printed in cheap paper, and there is a wide variety of colouring and cover-styles:

[39] Another important detail is that Müller, with Father Abel Varzim, published also in *O Papagaio*, in its very first translation, *Tintin en Amérique*, as "Aventuras de Tin-Tim na América do Norte" (starting in April 1936, at issue 53). It has some significant differences from its original *mise-en-page*, but it also added (limited) colour, which positively surprised Hergé. The character and story settings went through significant "localized" alterations, according to the *Instruções'* principles, perhaps the most significant one being making Tintin a Portuguese reporter, or setting *Tintin in Congo* in Angola (with all the necessary national colonialist changes). This had no weight whatsoever in Hergé's or Casterman's creative output or translation concerns, according to Jan Aarnout Boer (cf. http://www.publico.pt/cultura/noticia/centenario-de-herge-portugal-foi-o-primeiro-pais-do-mundo-a-publicar-o-tintim-a-cores-1294692 [last access: March 7th, 2014], but the fact is that Müller managed to guarantee the onging translations into Portuguese of all adventures throughout all his editorial endeavours, from *O Papagaio* to *Diabrete*, and then to *Foguetão*, *Cavaleiro Andante* and *Zorro*.

black-and-white, a second colour or even four-colour printing for the inside, and colourful covers, whether in matte or glossy paper stock, but usually printed in four colours (earlier in two or three), etc. Formats could go from in-octavos to broadsheets. Many were supplements to newspapers or magazines (such as the case of *ABCzinho* for the *ABC* magazine, or *Pim Pam Pum!* and *Notícias Miudinho* for, respectively, the dailies *O Século* and *Diário de Notícias*). But others were sold as self-standing titles (*O Mosquito*, *Senhor Doutor*, *Papagaio*, etc.). In this respect, then, these publication formats, the formal strategies of comics-making and narrative, thematic and intermedia implications of these artists, in a word, these formulas were in some consonance with the practices of the field throughout Europe. One would have to wait for Carlos Botelho to witness a completely original breakage from these more or less homogeneous practices, with his one-page chronicles, "Ecos da Semana" ("Weekly Echoes") for the weekly *Sempre Fixe* [Image 1]. Still, Botelho would not have properly followers in his use of an open-ended page composition, where the represented urban elements become themselves the units for actions and episodes, organised not according to episodic structures but thematically or relationally, not to mention his attention to seemingly banal, quotidian life. One can look at him, however, as a sort of precursor to practices, both formal and thematic, that would find traction in the 1990s.

Throughout the 1940s, then, but also the 1950s and 1960s, magazines such as *Cavaleiro Andante, O Mosquito,* and *Jornal do Cuto* (along with a few others), substantiated the general, coherent images of comics as a vehicle able to consolidate the "Estado Novo" re-imagining of Portugal: a strong, Christian, colonial empire, proud of its history but also proud of its contemporary simplicity, that had nothing to do with the vices of more industrialised countries. "Alone but proud," as one famous *dictum* of Salazar went (supported by the official neutrality during WWII). This does not mean that there were no differences and tensions between titles, but we cannot go into detail about it in this text. For instance, to a certain extent, the purpose of Müller's *Cavaleiro Andante* was to create a counterpoint to *Mundo de Aventuras*, another comics magazine but that published mostly translations of Anglophone material, starting with adventurous titles such as *Flash Gordon* and *Steve Canyon* (which was published under the name "Luís Ciclon," because the photolytes were brought from Spain), but also humour strips such as Al Capp's *Alley Oop*. *Mosquito*, which had a long life from 1936 to 1953 published the most important naturalist Portuguese comics artists of the time alongside Spanish giants such as Emilio Freixas and Jesús Blasco. *Cavaleiro Andante*, on the other hand, although it also had foreign material -

such as Bob Lubber's *Tarzan*, stories by Hergé, Caprioli, and adaptations from children's literature - aimed at producing "healthier" stories, usually confined to adventurous genres: detective (not "crime") stories, sports stories, sea-faring stories, adventures in the jungle, the U.S. Wild West and other exotic places, or in the times of the musketeers or Christian crusaders (the very title appeals to a sort of Middle Ages' flavour). Its weekly 20 pages had some variety, but they were confined to the "boys adventures" field. In any case, many other magazines also conformed to this description.

The greater names that would constitute this (long) generation are those of Eduardo Teixeira Coelho, José Antunes, Carlos Alberto Santos, Fernando Bento, Augusto Barbosa, Manuel Alfredo, José Ruy, José Garcês, Raul Correia and Vítor Péon, many of which influenced by the naturalistic style of a Harold Foster (particularly true in relation to Coelho, Garcês and Péon). Apart from what was indicated above, many stories adapted classical, central texts of Portuguese literature - more often than not, texts that could be read within a pro-colonialist sense, such as Camões' *Os Lusíadas* or Fernão Mendes Pintos' *Peregrinação*[40] - or that would contribute towards an exaltation of "Portuguese soul," as in the case of Alexandre Herculano's and Eça de Queirós' books. Adaptations of foreign literature were not rare, based on stories by the likes of Walter Scott, Jules Verne, George Dumas, Lewis Carroll or Erich Kästner. As we've seen, more typical genres were pursued, from westerns (Péon's *Tomhawk Tom*), to jungle and sea adventures (Barbosa's and Santo's *João dos Mares* [Image 2], José Ruy's later *Bomvento* stories) or episodes from Portuguese history (Antunes' *Geraldo sem pavor* or Carlos Alberto Santos' story on D. Fuas Roupinho, "A espada nazarena").

Needless to say that most of these works assumed a political *éloge* of the civilizing mission of Caucasian Christians (if not specifically the Catholic Portuguese), and simple Manichaeism was the narrative norm. Perhaps to consider them as nurturing "political complicity" with the Estado Novo's politics is going too far, but they were both constituted by the normative discourses of the time as much as they were contributing to it, especially if we take in account the children-oriented publications in which they were published, and the overall *docere, delectare et movere* framework of those titles. In any

[40] But also against. This is not the place to discuss it, of course, but *Os Lusíadas*, being a strongly polysemic poem, has been re-framed constantly according to several perspectives and can warrant both pro-imperialistic readings as well as alternative, even resisting readings against the Empire (such as Eduardo Lourenço's famous *O Labirinto da Saudade*, studies by Luciana Stegagno Picchio, or José Madeira's *Camões Contra a Expansão e o Império. Os Lusíadas como Antiepopeia.*). *Peregrinação* has been always read as an anti-epic text, but this does not mean that one can elicit senses, especially through a partial adaptation into comics format, that underlines its "adventurous" side.

case, there *were* actually comics magazines, or magazines that included comics, that were official propaganda organs, such as the ones belonging to the Mocidade Portuguesa (MP): *Jornal da MP*, *Camarada*, *Pisca-Pisca*, *Lusitas* and *Fagulha* (these last two associated to the feminine wings of the MP). Many of the artists we have mentioned participated throughout these titles, but one must beware of certain automatic, contemporary reactions to these historical texts, lest we fall into "anachronisms of memory" (Frey 2002).[41]

Stylistically speaking, we could also subsume most of these works under a general rubric of a naturalist drawing approach to the human figure, a clear use of ink lines to depict the objects and a primary application of colours, somewhat limited by the epoch's technology. *Mundo de Aventuras*, as well as *Titã*, *Falcão*, or *O Pirilau* published other Spanish and British material, which included science fiction and war comics, but all in all they conformed to the overall category of "boys' own" type of publications.

April the 25th and contemporaneity.

After a few failed attempts at coups, and as a form of protest on the bloody, crushing, ongoing wars in the African colonies (Angola, Mozambique and Guinea) since 1961, a group of low rank military officials managed to bring down the regime in April the 25th 1974, reinstituting democracy. This was more or less a bloodless, pacific change, but it would be followed by high tensions between the military, the Communist party (illegal for years, but which survived as a clandestine organisation and was quite well-organised), other larger political forces, the myriad of smaller parties, conservative sectors of society, etc., which both lead to a complicated period of economical and political stress (known as PREC, or "Ongoing Revolutionary Process") and the coup/counter-coup of November the 25th 1975, which some commentators point out as the consolidation of the democratic regime in Portugal. Economically speaking, however, not much would be solved. In fact, some left-wing analysts see in November 25th the point in which the possibility of a concrete Socialist alternative was blocked for good (under the pressure of NATO, the USA, etc.), so that the dynamics of reconstituting a capitalist State is assured.

In any case, the "25 de Abril" or "Carnation Revolution," as it is known, is still celebrated today as the foundation of modern, democratic Portugal. Consumption levels of

[41] The figure of Hergé, to quote but arguably the most famous example of this problematic, has served as a model for this discussion (both its excesses and its fruitful developments).

the working classes were raised, and apart from the political and economic changes at high-level, the popular movements, quite politicized throughout the 1970s, were able to act upon other fronts as well. A few examples were health, leading to the creation of the SNS, or National Health Service; education, lifting drastically alphabetization and literacy levels, and a wider access to various levels of schooling to the working classes; housing, whether through radical occupations or new projects of social habitation; social security, which updated values and widened its eligibility criteria; justice, granting easier and more universal access. Not to mention access to culture, thanks to the disappearance of censorship, the multiplication of agents and a plurality of views, etc.,[42] as well as along gender lines (a woman needed her father's or husband's authorization to get a job, for instance, or even apply for a passport, and things changed also for the better on employment and family rights).[43] As Santos concludes in his 1985 article, these claims and conquests "not only forced to more or less profound changes on a legal level, but also compelled the State to become more involved in the regulation of social reproduction" (1985: 901).

Necessarily, these dramatic changes had consequences on comics-making as well. The maintenance of children-oriented, mass-marketed magazines and journals after the regime change should not, however, makes us think that *all* comics belonged to that category. Especially after the 1974 Revolution, with the disappearance of censorship, and the multiplication of political movements, each with their own newspapers and presses, political satire cartoons appeared everywhere, sometimes leading to the publication of books, or even series of books. To give but one example, Pedro Massano created a strip for the weekly paper *A Luta*, entitled "O Abutre" ["The Vulture"], in 1978 (there are mentions that they have been created before, in 1973, for another newspaper, and perhaps they were considered too risky at the time), which presented a dark, political humour, and that would led to seven oblong, soft cover books. Maoist propaganda also translated Chinese propaganda comics, an adaptation of Marx's *Capital* was created by Carlos Barradas (1978), and politicians became fodder for satirical stories. Moreover, pornography was also another line of development, usually mixed with some humour, with outrageous and fantastical stories. These were not sold in secret, and had actually commercial distribution, with mostly foreign material, even though their quality left much to be desired.

[42] A famous "revolutionary" song of the time, by Sérgio Godinho, entitled *Liberdade* ["Freedom"] (1974), spoke of (my free translation) "There will only be freedom when we have/bread, peace, housing, health, education./There will only be freedom when we have/Freedom to change and decide."

[43] Suffice it to say, not immediately. An effective law on abortion, for instance, only came about in 2007, and indicators still point out to a significant discrepancy on wages between man and women.

And sometimes, you could have both those lines mixed together. The most important figure in political satire mixed with risqué representations is, undoubtedly, José Vilhena, who worked as a cartoonist throughout the 1950s, but would engage in a very productive phase in the next decade, creating many magazines that would tackle, through not-that-subtle and eroticised humour, political issues such as censorship, the vacuous discourse of politics, the economical crisis, and so on (which lead to his arrest by the political police a couple of times). After April the 25th, his activity became unbridled, and the endemic political and economical crises gave him plenty of topics for his work (Zink 2001).

Up until the 1990s, the Portuguese editorial market would be mostly characterized by short weekly magazines with Portuguese and foreign works, as well as an increasing number of translations of albums, especially from the French-Belgium axis. As we have seen, most domestic production was subsumed to historical themes or genre adventures, a trait inherited and especially pushed by magazines such as *O Mosquito* (published between 1936 and 1986), *Cavaleiro Andante* (from 1952 to 1962), and, later, the Portuguese *Tintin* (from 1968 to 1982)[44], some of which "pre-published" two to four pages per issue of the material that would later be collected in the form of an album. The first two mixed foreign material from the most diverse sources (France and Belgium, of course, but also Spain, England and the U.S.) and helped create the first "professional comics artists"[45] in Portugal, such as Jayme Cortez, Teixeira Coelho, Péon, Ruy and Garcês. Some of these emigrated in order to work full time as comics artists, as Teixeira Coelho, Carlos Roque and Vítor Péon, while others were able to stay in Portugal while collaborating with foreign publishers, like José Pires. But slowly the room for Portuguese artists started to meet obstacles. With magazines such as *Diabrete* (1941-1951), *Faísca* (1943-1944, where American super-heroes debuted in Portugal) and *O Mundo de Aventuras* (1949-73) and *Condor Popular* (more of a collection, this *petit format* collected mostly rearranged English-speaking newspaper strips, with each issue publishing a particular character or storyline, it appeared from April 1951 to April 1972), catering especially British and North-American works, including super-heroes, a new "demand" was being nurtured in Portuguese readers that could not be satisfied with the same formulas as before. *Tintin*

[44] *Mosquito* went through several phases, being its peak the biweekly format with a 30 000 print run.

[45] Although we may adjectivate some contemporary comics artists as "professional" and "exclusive," especially if they are working for international markets (the U.S. mostly), it is a little of a stretch to speak of professionalization these days. Many of the artists have day jobs and several means of subsistence that *not* their comics production.

opened the floodgates for the "French-Belgium" avalanche, as dubbed, tongue-in-cheek, by António Dias de Deus (1997: 269).

The importance and impact of this last magazine in several generations of readers, including that of the present author and of some of the artists addressed in this dissertation, cannot be underplayed. When *Tintin* appeared in 1968 it brought two innovative aspects: in terms of content, it introduced many of the contemporary artists working in the French-speaking world of comics (as for instances, Goscinny and Uderzo, Christin and Mézières, Didier Comès and Hugo Pratt), and, formally speaking, its paper was of high quality, and it published its stories in four colours, using a thicker, brighter paper stock for its coloured cover. Focusing mainly on French and Belgian comics, it brought about what I believe to be a ground-breaking mix, for its editor-in-chief, Diniz Machado, was able to secure the rights for both material from quite distinct Francophone magazines, such as Lombard's *Tintin*, Dupuis' *Spirou* and Dargaud's *Pilote*. This lead to a very specific, tightly-knitted conceptual formation in the minds of the Portuguese of a "French- Belgium scene," if not style, and it allowed for the creation of a wide fan base. It also had other material as well, once in a blue moon, such as stories of Will Eisner's *The Spirit* or Gil Kane's *Jason Drum*, but it would basically be associated with French-Belgium authors. In part, it was also the influence of this magazine that introduced the Gallicism "banda desenhada," as I've already mentioned. Despite its focus, *Tintin* opened up a few exceptions for Portuguese artists. The first few months had counted with Péon, but he would leave shortly. José Ruy was more or less a regular presence in the magazine, with both long stories and short, sometimes even publicity one-pagers, in colour. But perhaps the most important, if irregular, contribution was the two pages, almost always in the first or last, black-and-white pages, with a younger generation of Portuguese artists. Starting in the late 1970s and early 1980s, we would see work of people like Pedro Morais, António Serer, Mário Jorge, and more importantly, due to his unrelenting production rate and quality, Fernando Relvas.

Therefore, there was not much space for Portuguese artists to start with, but even less so to engage in works that would not conform to a certain norm or that would not cater to public expectations, whether in terms of genre, style or even readership. There were exceptions, however, being the most known and brilliant the magazine *Visão*. With a luxurious paper stock and brilliant colours, it would carry almost exclusively Portuguese material, a remarkable move in itself, but more remarkable still by the fact that these works

were aimed at adult audiences, dealing with taboo themes - for Portuguese comics -, from drugs to politics, to urban dread and surrealism[46]. Launched precisely one year after the "Carnation Revolution," the magazine was deeply marked by the left-wing tinted discourses of the time, a struggle for ever-widening but also revolutionizing democratization, which included facing contemporary issues such as the Colonial Wars, Workers' Rights, and a fight against international capitalism and the pressure of Western powers (the presence of the C.I.A. in Portugal was not that secretive) against the possibility of the Communist 1975 coup. *Visão* included, for instance, a comics biography on Amílcar Cabral (an unsigned Cuban work, translated into Portuguese), thus far considered one of the Empire's major "public enemies." There was also an interrupted story written by Machado da Graça and drawn by Vitor Mesquita, "Matei-o a 24" ("I killed him at the 24th"), about the hardships of a Portuguese white soldier to reintegrate civil society and his memories of a relationship with "the enemy," a black libertarian. Highly influenced by a myriad of sources (North American underground *comix*, the Losfeld books, *Métal Hurlant*, and so on), every artist had a particular style, ranging from the naturalistic approaches to highly stylized or classically cartoony styles. All in all, names such as Vítor Mesquita, Zé Paulo, Pedro Massano, Carlos Barradas, Carlos Zíngaro, José Pedro "Zepe" Cavalheiro, Isabel Lobinho, Nuno Amorim would have their debut in *Visão*, even if not all would continue creating comics regularly. Despite its material quality and its diversity, several tensions within the team, a poor distribution scheme and probably mis-management and a general lack of interest by the public lead to its incredibly short life. *Visão* would last for only 12 monthly issues, from April 1975 to May 1976. However, it would have a profound impact beyond its short life, and it is still remembered (and sought for) today by new generations[47].

To a certain extent, each decade could be characterised by one single magazine title. However, after the demise of *Tintin* in 1982 and *O Mundo de Aventuras in 1987*, and despite a few other projects of typically pre-published episodes of French-Belgian album types, with no Portuguese authors (such as *Spirou*, 2 series from 1971 to 1979; *Flecha 2000,* 1978; *Jornal BD*, from 1982 to 1987; and *Selecções BD*, 2 series from 1988 to 2001), comics would almost disappear from the newsstands, ending thus the long, declining curve

[46] Point in fact, the artist Isabel Lobinho adapts some short stories by Mário Henrique-Leiria, one of the central names of the 1950s Surrealism movement in Portugal.

[47] Actually, quite recently an anthological selection entitled *ReVisão* was issued in 2016 by Chili Com Carne.

of its "Golden Age"[48]. Imported Brazilian small magazines ("gibis",[49] in its Brazilian parlance)would remain for quite some time, though, translating American superhero comics and international Disney material (through publishers like Ebal, Abril and Morumbi), and American superheroes are sold in Portuguese translations (through the Agência Portuguesa de Revistas, which also had other adventure titles). Book shops carried the albums (Bertrand and, later on Meribérica/Liber), but without the magazines supporting the fanbase, the presence of comics starts exiting the "mass market" to enter its "niche market" phase.

This does not mean that "commercial projects," or that we can consider as such, including of Portuguese authors, disappeared completely. There was actually even room to create "national heroes." As an illustration, we could quote two examples of these hero-characters.

First, *Tónius*, by the simply named authors Tito and André, was created as a home grown pastiche of *Astérix*, focusing on a resisting Lusitan leader to irritable Arab invaders (even though historically incorrect, we can read it as an humorous attempt to avoid having the historically correct Roman invaders, which would bring it even closer to its model). *Hélas*, it had a very short life on the Portuguese *Spirou* magazine and only one book in 1981.

Second, *Jim del Mónaco*, created by writer Tozé Simões and drawn by Luís Louro, started in 1985, being published in newspapers and comics magazines, it was actually quite long-lived for contemporary standards, adding up to 7 albums published (and re-published in new colour editions) between 1986 and 1993, and an 8th in 2016. Blatantly a parody of classical adventure comics of a bygone area, and through a style analogue to the neo-*ligne claire* approach (especially after Daniel Torres), the series dives directly into narrative clichés and serves as *homage* to known series (above all, Alex Raymond's and Don Moore's *Jungle Jim*, but with elements from *Tintin*, *Blake & Mortimer*, and *Tarzan* as well, not to mention an incredible intertextuality with popular films, comics and literature). However, at times it feels that the quotes of all the problematic heteronormative and

[48] In the television documentary series *Verbd* (RTP2, 2007), António Dias de Deus sums this issue up by considering that from a strictly materialist, Marxist point of view the Golden Age of comics in Portugal is around the 1940s, when comics were sold in the streets with newspapers (printed in them or as special inserts or supplementary magazines) and were "read by the largest number of people and came at a cheap price."

[49] A word borrowed from the title of a children's magazine launched in 1939, and that would survive into the early 1960s.

eurocentric representations of women as necessarily sexy and helpless, the African sidekick as under-civilized and speaking "petit nègre," are uncritical, deprived of their original political implications. Despite its overall "caricature" status, and the fact that these are books that circulate in a wholly different cultural context, that would contribute to the idea that they are not reflecting a normative perception but act as an ironic *clin d'oeil* to past representations, nonetheless it seems that the representations themselves are upheld and not deconstructed (Cunha 1995 and 2006).

In the Spring of 1990, a new experience of a luxurious magazine with almost exclusively contemporary Portuguese material would show up: *Lx Comics*. Albeit also short-lived (4 issues, ending in the Summer of 1991, with the last issue with no significant distribution), it would remind one of *Visão* for its national roster and the remarkable diversity of visual styles and narrative approaches. Its director was Renato Abreu, and the editor was João Paulo Cotrim, who would become a key agent in the development of comics throughout the decade, thanks to his work at the Bedeteca de Lisboa, as well as a writer of important books, one of which I will address in the chapter on Miguel Rocha. *Lx Comics* presented artists that had been around in the fanzine circuit like Filipe Abranches, Diniz Conefrey, Maria João Worm, Jorge Varanda, Alice Geirinhas, André Lemos, Jorge Mateus, Pedro Burgos, Nuno Saraiva, but also "recuperated" Zepe and Zé Paulo, from *Visão*, and Fernando Relvas, from *Tintin* (all of which, however, collabourated with other magazines, newspapers or published books, especially Relvas). Although it also included work by international artists (introducing Miguelanxo Prado or the work of Alain Corbel, who would live and work in Portugal for many years), *Lx Comics* can be seen as presenting a new generation of authors, many of which are still pretty much active today, influenced also by new international tendencies, and quite informed not only on comics but also other creative disciplines.

With some important contextual differences (both cultural and economic), *Lx Comics* could be seen as introducing in Portugal the "alternative" or "independent" scene, mixing, once again, new French traditions (what Bruno Lecigne would deem as "le nouveau réalisme"), American alternatives and even, closer to home, Spanish experiences (the outstanding anthology *Madriz*, edited by Felipe Hernández Cava, published between 1983 and 1987, was a probable model, not only editorially but financially, as both had municipal-level support; "LX" stands for "Lisbon"). To a certain extent, *LX Comics* was

the signpost of the entrance of Portuguese comics into the contemporary stage of "alternative comics."

The contemporary scene.

According to Sara Figueiredo Costa, throughout the 1990s the perception of comics as something beyond mere juvenile stuff or nostalgic throwbacks changed in Portugal, but more in its social dimension than in a full blossoming and diversification of the market forces. There were more channels of distribution, true, and following international trends comic books became more present in general bookstores and they were better handled as well, allowing for them to reach a slightly wider readership, especially in demographics if not in absolute numbers (Costa 2011: 60 ff.). Also, more consolidated formulas for exhibitions and festivals, which underline the importance of exhibiting "original art" and contact between authors and audiences through talks and signings, in detriment to commercial aspects (there were no American-styled "conventions" in Portugal until recent years and the ones that tried this formula were short-lived), and sometimes with significant budgets, were also paramount in this circulation.

What follows is a concise, though unavoidably zigzag-like, portrayal of important references in the construction of the "scene" of comics today.

The International Comics Festival of Amadora (FIBDA) was launched in 1989, organised officially by the City Council of Amadora (although it has developed its own team throughout the years, including a small department called CNBDI, following Angoulême's namesake in mission, albeit not in budget, scope or even efficiency; it was closed in 2014, giving way to Amadora's own Bedeteca) and was never interrupted. Although its main focuses are on more commercially leaning, mass-market comics published in Portugal, it always aimed to include exhibitions on less known national traditions, or authors working outside the U.S. or the French mainstreams. Porto had its own Salão Internacional, which actually began before FIBDA, in 1985, but it would only last until 2001 (annually until 1989, and then biannually). Growing exponentially and also more informed than FIBDA on contemporary tendencies, it presented a larger number of both contemporary Portuguese and foreign artists, especially of "alternative" circles (such as Joe Matt, Seth, Adrian Tomine, Julie Doucet, Étienne Davodeau, etc.). In 1996, the

Bedeteca de Lisboa was opened. This was a city-level specialised comics library and institution dedicated to comics' exhibitions and publishing and whose executive director was J. P. Cotrim. Again, somewhat akin to the CNBDI, it had its own Festival, the Salão Internacional de Banda Desenhada e Ilustração, which started in 1998 but would have a short-lived and convoluted history until 2005 (what started as an annual event on comics and illustration soon split those areas, presented alternatively yearly).[50] In 2011, for both economic and political reasons, the Bedeteca was "absorbed" by the adjoining (literally so, as they are in the same building) local municipal library of Olivais, and lost its budgetary autonomy. Although it still exists as a separate library, and it continually buys books, it no longer organizes exhibitions, workshops, meetings nor does it publish.

The cities of Viseu and Moura, and a few other smaller cities, also have their own long-lived international festivals, although both seem to focus more on a nostalgic-tinted approach, with retrospective looks at classical domestic and foreign masters, and a rather narrow consideration of new artists (only those published through larger or commercial platforms, or working in conventional genres and styles, and so on). For instance, Viseu, every year, presents an exhibition of an artist working on the famous western Italian series *Tex Willer*. More recently, another international festival joined these references. The Beja Festival opened its first edition in 2005, and despite having a shorter budget than FIBDA or the Porto and Lisbon "Salons," and dramatically so in the last years, it has consistently presented a varied choice of international names, from highly recognizable names from mainstream North-American superhero comics to experimental artists from Greece, from famous names of the French-speaking industry to upcoming Portuguese talents, and with a very special relationship with some Spanish contemporary artists.

All in all, it is somewhat debatable that all these different events and venues, although working *with and on* comics, aim at quite different audiences, although there is, expectedly, some overlap. The Lisbon, Porto and Beja meetings are quite more varied in their programs, and somewhat more attentive to contemporary tendencies, but also their initiatives and style of exhibition and communication is rather appealing to audiences which would not define themselves as "comics fans," but people more generally interested in cultural production, from literature to the visual arts, to cinema *d'auteur* and performance arts. As S. F. Costa writes,

[50] See Beaty for a brief presentation and long-term, international contextualization (2008: 120 ff.).

> "Comics reception was no longer an exclusive province of fans of juvenile adventures and people with nostalgia for a supposed Golden Age. Comics [with the Lisbon and Porto salons] took their first steps in their inscription within the ample, transdisciplinary field of the arts. Without forgetting the patrimony that motivated publications and exhibitions before [the 1990s], and without neglecting the heritage of mass communication that structured comics' perception to the detriment of any other approach, comics stepped out of the ghetto of 'bedephilia' (a term that expresses more the fans' enthusiasm that the very field, given that comics make up a language with a as plural vocation than any other) and became available to a wider, necessarily heterogeneous audience" (my translation; 2011: 61).

I would like to add a few short words on exhibitions, arguably one of the strategies to put comics into the cultural map. Exhibitions can be monographic or collective and can be organized within the frameworks of the festivals and salons,[51] or within small, "alternative" shows.[52] More often than not the exhibitions are associated to a book launch, a historical chapter that is being rediscovered, a contest, a thematic or national grouping, or any other commemorative reason. There are also cases in which some artists who make comics are known as visual artists and are used to be part of that other art world, but the exhibitions of those particular *other* works have little or no traction in relation to the comics world or are not done with any dialogue between those worlds in mind.[53] The most important gestures, I think, are those which attempt to present a choice guided by more consolidated criteria that will lead to an appreciation of comics' own intrinsic, aesthetical elements, presenting them to wider, non-specialised audiences. There are only a handful examples, but they have contributed to that dialogue I referred to.

In 2000, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation presented *Banda Desenhada Portuguesa*, a presentation that crossed the history of national comics, organised by João Paiva Boléo and Carlos Bandeiras Pinheiro. A lush two-volume catalogue was produced but, as one can surmise, the criteria were solely those of historical relevance. That same year, in a completely different ambient, in the contemporary art and cultural centre Zé dos

[51] More often than not with a local impact only, but sometimes able to integrate projects of international projection, such as Lisbon Bedeteca's presentation, in 2009, of the Finnish *Glomp X*.

[52] As for instance the ones organised by Feira Laica throughout the 2000s and early 2010s, in Lisbon, or associated with the A Mula collective (Marco Mendes, Miguel Carneiro et al.) in Porto, which sometimes were also re-presented in other cities or even outside Portugal.

[53]Here we could talk about people like Eduardo Batarda, Alice Geirinhas, Bruno Borges, Pedro Zamith, Isabel Carvalho, Mauro Cerqueira, Carlos Pinheiro and Nuno Sousa, who work mostly on painting, but also drawing, sculpture, installation and performance.

Bois gallery, the *Zalão de Danda Bedenhada* (a pun with the acronym of the gallery, ZDB and BD), was presented, co-organised by Marcos Farrajota, comics author and editor at Chili Com Carne, focusing on more independent, avant-garde informed artists (in fact, Farrajota's new editorial project, Mmmnnnrrrg, was born out of this junction). By the early 2010s, several smaller, independent spaces opened their gallery rooms to several projects, whether of visual arts, performance and music, but also considered comics as a valid art form. Some of them were short lived, while others are still active today and some of them are actually more or less specialised in comics and illustration. We can quote Plumba, Dama Aflita and Mundo Fantasma in Porto, or Work&Shop and Trem Azul in Lisbon. In 2011, the Colecção Berardo Museum of contemporary art opened an exhibition called *Tinta dos Nervos*, curated by myself. This show presented almost 40 artists, most of them working on comics, although a few visual artists were also included who had created work based on visual, structural or conceptual approaches that are akin to comics (such as painter Eduardo Batarda, for his groundbreaking, art book *O Pinguim Blindado*, or Isabel Baraona for her small pseudo-narrative, drawing booklets). Only two of the artists were "historical" references (Bordalo Pinheiro and Carlos Botelho), as all the others were alive and mostly still working on comics. There were both people who had been working since the 1960s to newcomers that were yet to publish their first book (this considering that publishing a "book" is some sort of step for the consolidation of a "career"). This was the first time, in Portugal, that an institution dedicated to the arts presented comics as an *art form*, and not as a mass medium or as a source of historical documentation, so it comes as no surprise that the comics presented here crossed many forms, genres, styles and degrees of public projection. Before this, I also had the opportunity to write a television documentary, directed by Paulo Seabra, for the national channel RTP2, presented in the Summer of 2007 in 5 25-minutes episodes. A first part (almost the whole of the first 2 episodes) was focused exclusively on history, while the rest of the program zeroed in on a group of 11 contemporary authors. However, it also assessed many other realms, from the editorial world, the economical conjunctures, the diversity of genres and styles, work processes, academic and study venues, etc. Despite a planned DVD edition, this was not issued yet, if it will ever be. Despite the danger of bragging, I do believe that both were significant events in the public broadcasting of comics culture and creation beyond the usual borders of its circle, even though I must also admit that they have had little if any influence in the most important aspect of comics-production: its publishing and circulation.

Part of the growth pointed out by Costa was felt specifically in the multiplication of publishing platforms that were not only attentive to different interpretations of what one could do with and express through comics, opening up the possibility for the translation and publishing of artists usually unconsidered by more commercial publishers, but, more importantly, interested in creating room for new Portuguese authors with an incredible diversity of interests and research paths. These would include both independent small presses like Chili Com Carne, Polvo and Pedranocharco, but also publishers supported by city-level institutions, such as the "comic book" collection Lx Comics (recuperating the experience of the magazine in which Cotrim participated) from Lisbon's Bedeteca and the mini-comic collection Quadradinho from Porto's Salão. Moreover, Bedeteca also "inherited" *Quadrado* from the Porto Salão. What started as an oversized magazine with international and national comics, and some critical articles, more or less associated with the exhibitions in Porto and an incredibly international view on comics production, transformed into a smaller, book-like publication with more room for essays and theoretical work, both from known international names and domestic more or less established and budding critics (Beaty 2008: 129). Anthologies seem to be a sure bet when it comes to attempt to create a new, more cosmopolitan readership of contemporary comics, whether from institutionally supported projects or artist-run projects. As Beaty intuited brilliantly, efforts such as *Lx Comics*, *Noites de Vidro*, *Para além dos Olivais*, *Stad*, *Satélite Internacional*, among many others, "point[ed] to the possibility of producing highly focused works for local constituencies that are nonetheless rooted in a particularly regional vision of an increasingly transnational creative movement" (idem).

With the closing down of the Lisbon and Porto "Salões," the dwindling of Bedeteca's budget for publication and the demise of some publishers (Witloof, Pedranocharco), etc. the last years of the 2000s became marked by a significant publishing inertia. A major publisher, Asa, still puts out the same kind of French-Belgium albums that Meribérica-Liber did (in fact, until very recently, the editor was the same person), and sometimes even "swamps" the market with cheap-priced collection with so-called classics distributed with national daily papers: a few examples are the collections dedicated to *Astérix*, *Spirou*, *Corto Maltese* or *Blueberry*. The super-heroes collections from Marvel and DC or several "Classic Heroes" collections (which, by including things such as Jiro Taniguchi's *Aruku Hito/The Walking Man* or Joann Sfar's *Le chat du rabbin*, "diluted" somewhat their potential impact on a wider audience uninterested in collections such as these, losing an opportunity of reaching new, differentiated audiences). Although there is

no hard data on this, one is lead to believe that this "dumping" practice hurts the attention that could be guided towards Portuguese artist's productions. In fact, Sara Figueiredo Costa, who is a literary critic also interested in research on publishing policies, complains about the lack of data provided by publishers or book-related institutions that could help one to actually engage in a serious, anchored historical-sociological study of publishing in Portugal. This is a critique also pointed out by other specialists of the field, but it extends to all book-related areas not only in the country but elsewhere.

I cannot, therefore, pretend to give here a (pseudo-)sociological account on the present Portuguese market of comics, but I do hope that a general account of a recent year can show the environment of comics in Portugal. I would like to give out two notes beforehand. The first is that between the first version I wrote of this part, three years ago, and this updated version, in early 2017, many things have changed, and they may change again within the next couple of years, which is expected in a market whose main agents are middle- to small-sized independent publishers, instead of greater commercial houses. The second is that I have counted with the precious information provided by the site http://bandasdesenhadas.com/, spearheaded by Nuno Pereira de Sousa. *Bandas Desenhadas* is a platform that dedicates itself to all things related to comics, whether in the form of reviews, news, or comments on film adaptations, author's profiles, etc. One of the things it provides is monthly checklists and yearly balances of what has been published. I have counted on information directly provided by Pereira de Sousa for the next paragraphs (personal communications), which cannot be seen but as a very broad account.

First of all, there is a (not completely distinct) difference between the comics that are sold in bookstores - usually in the form of books, *albums* or "graphic novels" - and the ones sold in *bancas* - U.S.-style comic books, magazines (more or less A4-sized, 4-colour printed) or Brazilian-style *gibis* (small size magazines). Although there are other words that can be used, and whether as stores or self-standing kiosks, *bancas* stands for the many newsagent's shops that sell newspapers, magazines, tobacco, lottery tickets, public transportation monthly passes and many other things. It is here that one finds monthly or weekly comics, in Portuguese (of the European Portuguese variant but in the imported cases also in Brazilian Portuguese), as well as those books distributed with newspapers. A typical month will offer around 5 to 6 titles from the Italian publisher Bonelli (locally published by Mythos, with the famous westerns *Tex* and *Zagor*), around 12 North-American super-hero (DC and Marvel) comic books (all from Panini, with some titles from

the Spanish-based company and other imported from Brazil), 4 titles of Disney comics (mainly Italian material, translated and published in Portugal), and more than 15 titles associated with Brazilian author and children's comics powerhouse Mauricio de Sousa (of *Turma da Mônica* fame). There are also a few other occasional titles of children-oriented comics or magazines with a few pages of comics, in many formats, more often than not related to cartoon shows and toy lines (*Winx*, *Cars*, *Cartoon Network*, *Legos*, *Playmobil*). Sometimes there are publishers like Planeta de Agostini - a specialised producer of collectible products, like car miniatures, coins and toys, but also with a large selection of publications – who will act upon this market: throughout 2013-2014 they produced a collection of 70 hardback volumes, distributed weekly, of *Star Wars*-related comics. Salvat is putting out a *Graphic Novels Marvel* collection, with up to 60 hardback volumes. Furthermore, daily newspapers such as *Diário de Notícias*, *Jornal de Notícias*, *Correio da Manhã* but more recently *Público* may offer weekly collections of comics books. Many formats have been distributed with these newspapers, but there is a special incidence in the Franco-Belgium album format, both hard- and softcover, being the most recent example a collection of cheaply priced albums of Raoul Cauvin's and Lambil's *Les tuniques bleues*. There was also, in 2015 and 2016, two collections on "graphic novels," with 12 and 15 titles, respectively, mixing genres and styles, countries of origin and original dates of publication.

Apart from the several specialised comics bookstores, which will carry foreign material (mostly North-American comics in English, but there are a few important cases that do carry many Francophone material and, although quite less often, sometimes other languages too), a number of key *bancas* in the main cities will also carry American or French comics magazines or magazines about comics such as *L'Immanquable* or *dBD*.

As for books, any given month will have a handful of books being published. The major output is foreign material produced in the U.S. (mainly, super-hero material, and sometimes re-editions) and in Japan, with a number of current *shonen manga* series. Then follows original Portuguese material, less so open to re-editions. Humour strips (either international or domestic) are rare, but they do occur and, to a much lesser degree, children's comics. All in all, however, not more than 10 books in average are published. Until very recently, the years that this dissertation covers, only a fraction of that would be of Portuguese authors. Today there are a few changes, as in 2015 39% of comic books being published in Portugal were by domestic authors, putting it in the first place. But in

2016 it dropped to third place, with only 15%. Whatever the future holds, the bottom line seems to point out that there is no assuredness for the long-term survival or financial success of Portuguese-made comics even within the country.

As we have already discussed and will develop below, some of the Portuguese authors' output is made through small press endeavours, or even self-publishing efforts, whether in the form of "classical" fanzines of print-on-demand editions. All in all, in order to follow contemporary Portuguese comics production, one must make an effort in looking for alternative bases of distribution and divulgation, outside the *bancas* and bookstores circuit. This includes the specialised stores, which more often than not will *not* carry fanzines, and whose relationship with the smaller publishers is spotty at best.

Despite the multiplication of agents, however, the truth is that print runs are quite small and the economical investment in each title is residual. Many books are black-and-white, some pretty slim, and more often than not, Portuguese authors are not paid or, if they are, it is a "symbolic" value, and not a percentage of the whole book. Publishers, on the other hand, rarely expect anything more than covering printing expenses, and sometimes they do not even reach that value. There are cases, however, of successful, intelligent practices, so even if it's a small publisher, they are able to profit and consequently invest in new editions. Cases in point are Chili Com Carne and Kingpin Books, despite their almost opposite choice of styles and understanding of comics' production. At one time, these two publishers could be used as examples of the confirmation but also complication of outside notions as "alternative" and "commercial" when applied to Portuguese reality.

Costs are, in fact and as always, difficult to manage, from production to distribution, not to mention negotiating with the bookstores themselves to "conquer" shelf space, and then everything else a publisher may use to divulge the new book, from marketing strategies as simple as e-flyers to book launches to try to have an exhibition at the festivals or other venues that can act as a selling point, etc. Major publishers have specialized staff, or specific budgets for each item. In some cases, such as Asa, which is now part of a larger publishing conglomerate, called Leya, they have their own distributing company, and even bookstores. But in most cases the publisher consists of one or two people doing every single step of the process, from paginating a book to drive down to a bookstore and carry the books there.

A major problem associated with the social perception of comics is a lack of diversified space for its circulation. Literary criticism in general suffers from diminishing space, but comics suffer doubly; also, very rarely can newspapers divulge books whose prints runs are residual, although some newspaper critics do make an effort to include them. But there are other pernicious habits - such as the one that leads to shelving *any* comic book in the children juvenile section, in a specific comics section, or next to them - that quite often makes sure that a certain book will never reach its intended audience[54]. However, there are a few exceptions to this rule. Quoting again from Costa's text, the critic gives the example of the Portuguese edition, in two volumes, of Joe Sacco's *Palestine* (a co-joint effort of MaisBD, Mundo Fantasma and Devir in 2004). This book found shelf space not in the specific comics sections, but the more general sections, sometimes even the "new books" section or the "international relations" section. Moreover, its journalistic reception was quite wide-spread, and went beyond the usual (little) space reserved for comics' editions in newspapers and magazines, leading actually to large articles, including of influential international relations' journalists. As Costa concludes, "the interest about it by the audiences ended up making [*Palestine*] a milestone" (2011: 65). When Costa wrote her text, Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* had not been published yet in Portuguese, and Emmanuel Guibert et al.'s *Le Photographe* trilogy has never been published. She quotes these two titles, still, due to the fact that they had generated attention in newspapers and literary magazines, with articles written by leading critics of international politics and culture, despite the very fact they had *not* been published here. For Costa, this shows clearly that "some authors, if they were handled by publishers and marketers with the same methods that are used for literary fiction authors, would have all the conditions to access a good reception from a market point of view." Unfortunately, Portuguese comics authors very rarely can count on this sort of "handling."

Here's a few brief examples. Being a "household name" means little. Authors such as Filipe Abranches, Diniz Conefrey and Miguel Rocha, although they have outstanding books to their name, find sometimes overwhelming obstacles to publish new projects. In fact, Conefrey moved into self-publishing recently, faced with the lack of interest of major publishers (of comics or otherwise) in putting out his sophisticated creations (a saga of a

[54] By this we do not mean any empirical, real audiences, that may well be very varied and surprising. There is, however, or so I believe, a set of expectations of readers of, say, a mainstream *shonen* manga title about a young magical ninja and an alternative autobiography in comics of an Iranian woman living in Europe. Surely there are people who read and enjoy both - I do -, but the set of expectations leads to differentiated strategies of production (format, paper stock, design, even pricing, perhaps) as well as divulgation (different channels of communication, criticism, shelving practices, etc.).

Mexica *tlacuilo*, the adaptations of short prose and poems by Herberto Helder, and an outstanding abstract comics output). Undoubtedly, these authors would find an interested audience, if the "market" was not moulded towards comics-as-entertainment. Again quoting Costa, it is as if the market was "unable to separate market and audience segments, as it is done by the rest of the editorial industries" (64 ff.). So the upscaling of comics, in Portugal, seems to have failed. Another important Portuguese comics critic, Domingos Isabelinho, also adds that "from the people's street, comics went into the bourgeois bookstore. Even there, though, its survival is not for granted" (my translation; 2011: 89).

As of course, such a strain and lack of venues for publishing finds a complete reversal when we reach the ever more democratic information technologies, which allows the artists reach for alternatives to traditional processes of publishing (web-based platforms, print-on-demand, online sale and distribution, etc.). Additionally, although historically not a new thing, conquering international markets is also a solution. For instances, never as today did we have as many Portuguese authors working for foreign publishers (in a work-for-hire fashion), especially thanks to the many younger artists working for wide-known American publishers such as Marvel, but also Dark Horse, Boom! Studios, Moonstone Books, Shadowline/Image, Dynamite Entertainment, etc. - people such as Jorge Coelho, Filipe Andrade, André Lima Araújo, Eliseu Gouveia, Daniel Maia, Nuno Plati, João Lemos, Ana Freitas, Ricardo Venâncio, Miguel Montenegro, Miguel Mendonça and Daniel Henriques. But it's not only in commercial, mainstream markets that this traffic is found. International partnerships, travelling and independent fairs and venues also put alternative artists in contact, leading sometimes to publishers buying translations rights (Amok publishing *Mr. Burroughs*, by David Soares and Pedro Nora, as well as the first volume of *Histoire de Lisbonne*, by Oliveira Marques and Filipe Abranches, which was published in its entirety also in Italian by Comma 22, *Storia di Lisbona*), or inviting Portuguese artists to participate in collective projects (such *…de ellas*, an all-women anthology organised by F. H. Cava for De Ponent, which included Isabel Carvalho, or *Lanza en Astillero*, consisting of short adaptations of episodes from the *Quijote*, with one piece by Abranches, published by Castilla-la-Mancha, both from 2006), or even publishing original work in monographs. Once again, we can find this possibility both within the realm of more commercially-driven projects, such as Rui Lacas' *Merci, Patron* (published by Paquet in 2006, before the Portuguese *translation*), or alternative, art-related works such as André Lemos two silk-screened collections, *Mediaeval Spectres Soaked In Syrup* (from Russia's Pipe and Horse) and *Some Dishonourable Creatures Attacked Us* (from the

French Boom Books). Also, alternative European publishers have found ways of collabourating, either by sharing the expenses on printing, or distributing the books as widely as possible across the continent. Two good examples are *Greetings From Cartoonia*, which, although published by Stripburger, is supported by other publishers, including Chili Com Carne, and Tommi Musturi's *Walking with Samuel*, which is a co-edition between the Finnish Huuda Huuda, the Portuguese Mmmnnnrrrg,[55] Belgium's La 5ème Couche and Swedish Optimal Press.

Self-publishing, as we've seen, is an obvious choice. Not only where classical fanzines are concerned (photocopied, black-and-white, folded and stapled sheets of paper) but, thanks to new developments of printing techniques and a less expensive array of solutions, from offset to silkscreen to digital printing, all kinds of books (leading to endless discussions, especially where festival and awards categories are concerned, on what constitutes in precise terms "independent" publication, and the multiplication of terms such as prozines, artzines, and so on). This also frees artists and publishers (or artists-publishers) from conventional formats or "saleable" categories. Individually, in small groups or large collectives, artists such as André Lemos, Marco Mendes, Miguel Carneiro, Joana Figueiredo, Pedro Nora, Isabel Carvalho and Rodolfo, for instances, publish according to these affordances, and some of them engage in anthological projects (with both national and international participations). This does not mean that new agents in the Portuguese scene do not use the same possibilities to create work that is rather more conventional and genre-related, sometimes to very interesting and intelligent policies of management, as is the case of Mário Freitas' label, Kingpin Books, quoted before. It's worth it to spend some time in understanding this project.

Kingpin actually started as a comics bookstore, with a logo of a pig (the "Kingpin") which was, at one time, both the commercial logo but also a caricature avatar of its owner, Mário Freitas. In 2006, he began the namesake publishing platform, with comic book style publications, by several authors, including the adventures of that avatar, written by Freitas himself and drawn by a changing number of artists. Most of the titles Kingpin produces are by Portuguese artists, although there was at least one successful anthology with the very first book edition of the first chapters of Cameron Stewart's *Sin Titulo*. This is a one-man

[55] As mentioned before, in fact, both Chili Com Carne and Mmmnnnrrrg have the same editor-in-chief, Marcos Farrajota (who also works at the Bedeteca de Lisboa and was one of Beaty's sources, although the author misspells the name as "Pellojota" in the ackowledgements pages), but they are two different publishing venues. It is quite typical to mix them both, considering the pre-eminence of the editor, the sharing of the publisher's site, a certain "nature" of the works published, etc.

affair, considering that Freitas is also the letterer and designer of his publications, as well as the organizer of Anicomics, a mid-sized event dedicated mostly, but not exclusively, to North American comics and Japanese manga, as well as a annual award on the "industry." The way that Freitas coordinates all these events, for instances, inviting the winners of the Anicomics' comics contest to publish through Kingpin, the way he divulges his artists' work via social media - in which he is extremely prolific - or even through policies that put everyone's names on the book's covers (not only the writer and penciller and/or inker, but also the colourist, the letterer, etc.) makes it a quite tight project that reaches fast its audience and creates sufficient "buzz" in the scene, for better or for worse. The publisher is able to pay its authors, even if not comparable to (average) U.S. or France's page pay rates, and to have some profit, which is channelled into the production cycle. However, considering that the titles have not had a print run above 500 copies (although two titles have announced a second edition, and not merely a reprint), it is too soon to understand the scope of its "success". Nevertheless, this is a case in which commercial strategies - working within well-established genres, following the typically "Taylorist" method of North American comics, using mass media and a media-savvy discourse - have been used positively to reach out new audiences, even if within a circumference of "popular culture."

Although physically some of the projects of these last few names do not look like the typical fanzines of the 1980s (on which many of the artists I will deal with worked in their first steps, especially throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, and even in the 2000s), the most important aspect of these self-publishing projects can be associated with its political dimension, especially if we take in account Stephen Duncombe consideration of a "central ethic" to all zines, being the "emphasis on the personal" its most important aspect (1997: 235). As "a novel form of communication and creation that burst with an angry idealism and a fierce devotion to democratic expression" (idem: 228), "[z]ines offer a space for people to try out new personalities, ideas, and politics" (idem: 247). In fact, freeing themselves from concerns of integrating themselves in expectancies of genre, style, narrative formulas, commercial and critical success (especially from a mass market, or even niche market, perspective) and even readership, these publications aim towards a different expression of their author's creative will. Ducombe points that, at least where the examples he is addressing in his article, authors "do share this emphasis on the act over the result" (idem: 242), but that does not prevent achieving outstanding results in an aesthetical sense (complex and sophisticated storytelling techniques, drawing and colouring, the very

materiality of the publications, and so on). This will have some effect on the way the authors deal with trauma, as we will see.

So, to a certain extent, there are small fields characterized by different interests, some of which we may deem to be "commercial" while other to be "alternative." I have no wish, nonetheless, of leaving the impression of clear-cut, separate worlds. There is some overlap. Not only do many of these authors participate in the same festivals and exhibitions, as some will have a continuous participation in both self-publishing projects, usually more personal, and more commercially-inclined projects, that aim to conform to a certain genre. A case in point is André Pereira, who still creates personal works of weird poetical sci-fi, alone or in collaboration with João Machado, through his own label Clube do Inferno, while participating in collective projects with other "alternative" artists, as in the case of *QCDA* (probably short for "Quatro Chavalos do APOPcalipse," or "The Four Punks of the A*pop*calypse," a label bestowed by Farrajota, the editor of Chili Com Carne), or putting out "work-for-hire," as in the case of *Super Pig: O impaciente inglês*, written by Mário Freitas (and published by Kingpin).

There are always problems when we use these sort of dichotomies, which run into the danger of creating artificial fields. Metropolis *versus* periphery or commercial *versus* alternative leads to seemingly unambiguous narratives that do not tell the whole story and very often present too smooth of a pair of camps that actually share much of the same room of action, and sometimes the same stages, readers, venues, and even authors. Fan discourses and even some (the little there is) journalism on comics like to make use of "independent," "alternative," "underground," "artistic," "intellectual" comics, or similar terms (that in Portugal always go through a radical de-contextualization of their original employment and must find uneasy adaptations) against the perceived "commercial," "successful," "widely distributed" comics.

An article by Marie Manuelle Silva and Rui Malheiro points out to an idea that Portuguese comics seem to follow also these two major *lignes de fuite*. On the one hand, "an experimental branch, searching for a different way to express their worldview, and [on the other hand] a popular branch, that tries to develop the potential of comics as a form of entertainment" (2006: 171, my translation). The article is rather incomplete and reductive in its description of the Portuguese market (and history), and limited in its theoretical scope, but it does set the tone to an artificial opposition between practices, which, despite its artificiality, is rather pervasive in all the discourses on comics in the country (in festivals,

blogs, specialised or general press, and, as we can see, academia as well). The major problem with the article, however, and that we perceived before, is also repeated by other voices: it is the failure in being able to look at Portuguese comics globally without recourse to a direct comparison with outer, "more developed" models. This leads of course to a distorted vision, and a consideration of Portuguese comics as "lacking" something, and not as its own particular thing.

Having said this, it is still possible to consider that some artists do aim to work within the little entertainment industry that may exist in Portugal, or are willing to work within institutional *commandes*, such as the many books that exist on "The history of the city of X," for instance. But some, if not all, of the artists I will address in this dissertation fall into this porous territory we can call "alternative." Or at least in a space of tension between more traditional comics and open-ended artistic realms, leading to that which Domingos Isabelinho has called, on different occasions, and non-paradoxically, both "the expanded field" (see 2008; drawing from Krauss 1979) and the "strict field" of comics. Considering an alternative look at the history of comics, and understanding that a real openness of expressivity and visual experimentation could only take place after the experiences of the 1960s a little all over the world (some examples are Fred's *Le Petit Cirque*, Oesterheld's and Breccia's *Ernie Pike*, Buzzelli's *Zil Zelub*, the Japanese *Garo* magazine and Yoshiharu Tsuge oeuvre, the U.S. underground comix of Crumb and Pekar, etc.), "cartoonists finally broke free from the commercial chains so that they could freely express themselves in an adult and responsible way, as society allows the other children who're playing in the art's playground" (Beaty: 87).

In fact, trauma, while a free-ranging topic that can be addressed by the most varied forms and strategies within the medium of comics, will find in these "counter-aesthetic" works (Beaty: 49) a more critical reassessment of history, subjective-formation and even of comics themselves as an art form available for such an ambition, considering how some of these artist's formal choices render "challenges [of] our understanding of comics as a cultural form" (Beaty: 64).

Returning to Costa once again, which helps to sum up many of my thoughts in this chapter, she underlines that "a large part of contemporary artistic production is developed along a sort of margin, with a few points of contact with the centre, but more often than not without having that marginality forced by its agents" (2011: 52).

Chapter Three.

Marco Mendes and the Working-Through of the Everyday.

Marco Mendes (b. Coimbra, 1978) studied Design in Porto but he has been working almost exclusively in drawing and comics as both a practitioner and a teacher, having taught in Porto and Guimarães both disciplines and founding in 2010, with fellow artists Carlos Pinheiro and Nuno Sousa, the Clube do Desenho (Drawing Club), a successful non-profit teaching association dedicated to that art in the city of Porto.

We can say that the first phase of his comics work started in 2005, when Mendes, along with Miguel Carneiro, another fellow artist, founded the artistic-and-editorial duo A Mula (lit., "The Mule"), which would publish a number of "classical" fanzines (xeroxed, stapled and folded A3 folios, mostly black-and-white) until they published their last project as a duo, the 2009 *Qu'Inferno.* This is an oversized, heavy paper stock, with individually spray-coloured, silkscreen covers, anthology of comics and illustration, a veritable "who's who" of the Portuguese independent circles. After this, both artists would be involved in other collective projects, but the A Mula was no more. Although not precisely a trend, it is remarkable that in Porto many artists create editorial duos that are born out of personal relationships (colleagues at the university, roommates, partnerships, etc.). Apart from Mendes and Carneiro, Carlos Pinheiro and Nuno Sousa also had a zine called *O Senhorio* ("The Landlord"), Júlio Dolbeth and Rui Vitorino Santos founded the Dama Aflita gallery, and before them, but also within the same generation, Isabel Carvalho and Pedro Nora had various projects, from *ALíngua* ("The Tongue") to *Stad* and *Satélite Internacional*. This circumstance is important in the sense that it reveals the particularly localized strategies for creation and circulation of work in Porto, in specific networks made of alternative record and bookstores, independent galleries or artist-run spaces (quite often the home of the artists' themselves), fairs and so on. Of course, there are also collaborations with people from other cities and quite a lot of travelling, blog news and word-of-mouth.

In any case, Mendes did not only work within these platforms, he also expanded upon or beyond them, participating in several exhibitions - in 2007 he had a solo show of his drawings, comics and paintings, *Uma Formiga na Saia do Universo* ("An ant on the skirt of the universe"[56]) in Plumba gallery, Porto -, creating murals, organizing small press

56

fairs and writing essays on comics and creation. Apart from his own editorial projects, we may find his work also in national anthologies, newspapers or projects such as *Mutate & Survive*, *Quadrado*, *Mundo Universitário*, *Efeméride*, *Crack On*, or international projects like *Stripburger* (Slovenia), *Jungle World* (Germany) and *Varsóvia* (Poland). A particularly important zine is the one he created with fellow Porto underground comics artists Janus, in 2007, *O projecto de fecundar a lua* ("The project to fertilize the moon").

Mendes' oeuvre is composed mainly of autobiographical short pieces, although some of his stories are also informed by some degree of fantasy, delirium or self-fiction, and it oscillates between a self-derisory humour and a profound inquiry into deep emotions, sometimes quite painful but seldom verbalised, whether related to lovers, family members or simply when facing the overwhelming anguish of life's uncertainties. Since 2005, Mendes started working on a blog, *Diário Rasgado* ("Torn Journal")[57], first re-publishing his zine work, but quickly creating original work (both the autobiographical strips as well as self-standing drawings) that would contribute to his oeuvre. In fact, more often than not, these short stories[58] constitute an individual narrative unit, but there is an underlying principle that organises them, if not in a proper continuity, at least as a cohese flow. These "units" that had been published along many zines and publications, as well as in the blog, would be gathered into different formats, first into a soft-bound book (almost like a US comic book, with 32 pages) in English translation, *The Chinese Will Deliver the Pandas* (Plana Press: 2008), and then later, deeply reformulated (we will address the changes in ordering, composition, rewriting, cleaning up, etc.) in the hardcover *Diário Rasgado* (Mundo Fantasma/Plana: 2012).

Serialization does not mean for Marco Mendes, or any other Portuguese contemporary comics' artist, the same thing as it did, for example, in Victorian times, an epoch and market that allowed for profound significant developments in literary techniques, the massification of readership and the economic sustenance of its authors

Curiously, this is a pun based on a known Portuguese translation of an anthology of Dutch-speaking poetry from the 20th century, titled "A crumb on the skirt of the universe," in turn drawing from a poem by Lucebert.

[57] www.diariorasgado.blogspot.com.

[58] Usually they are constituted of an oblong composition of four panels, distributed in a 2x2 grid, and each has its own title, maintained in subsequent editions.

(Vann 1985: 2). On the one hand, it upholds some of the principles of Victorian serial fiction, where rewriting possibilities before issuing the text in a "final" book format are concerned. Just as Victorian writers could either revise heavily their serialised texts, such as Charles Reade, or adamantly decline to do so, like Dickens, so we can find examples in our corpus of profound revision (Miguel Rocha's first version of *Pombinhas*, as we will discuss in the next chapter), "simple" reordering (as Mendes does) or no transformation at all, apart from the obvious publishing format (the last chapter shall discuss some examples), which in itself may contribute, however, to a radical different reading. But on the other hand, most authors serialize their work today in online platforms, from content-hosting services such as blogs or sites, social media like Facebook, imageboards such a tumblr or 4chan, or even digital publishing formats (issuu, cbr, pdf, epub, and so on). Where Portugal is concerned, blogs are still the most popular way of divulging work, although the tumblr community has grown in the last few years. Moreover, most of these authors expected no payment whatsoever, and in the case of self-publishing, if the sold copies can cover the expenses of its printing costs, so much the better. But that is not in itself a goal or a guarantee.

Contrary to "central" countries like France and the United States, autobiography is not a regular "genre" in Portugal, and only a handful of artists engage on autobiography. There are artists who will create an autobiographical page or two for zines, anthologies or commemorative or circumstantial publications, but not much more. People who make autobiographical comics on a more sustained fashion are very few. In that "narrower" sense, we may point out a travelogue by David Campos, a handful of short stories by Teresa Câmara Pestana, one or two projects by Amanda Baeza, and more recently, Francisco Sousa Lobo, in a complex mixture of fiction, autofiction and autobiography, but only Marcos Farrajota could be seen as a full-fledged "autobiographical comics artist," with an ongoing, consolidated project. Other traits could have been emphasised, however, leading to different Portuguese-bound affiliations and groupings: an author that also explores deep emotions but devoid of melodrama is Paulo Monteiro; ironic distance is assured by Janus, Tiago Baptista and Miguel Carneiro; and the kind of formal questions we will find in Mendes is explored somewhat similarly by Carlos Pinheiro and Nuno Sousa. However, it is the convergence of all these traits that make Mendes' quite a singular author, which would also allow us to convergences with many other international names. The negotiation of these lines in a single body of work make Mendes' engage in that which Charlotte Pylyser has called "kaleidoscope humour," creating some distance but at the

same time establishing bonds with a autobiographical comics-dominated scene, where "a confessional tone is readily associated with honesty and substance" (2013: 28).

It comes as no surprise, then, and also bolstered by Mendes' stunning graphics, that he occupies a very special position within the Portuguese scene, in an intelligent, genuine and artistically irreprehensible fashion. A virtuoso on academic-style, sight-size, realistic drawing, with his figurative, anatomically correct forms, Mendes nonetheless uses everyday non-fine materials (pencils, ballpoint pens, but also Indian ink, whiteout, Scotch tape) as well as he leaves quite visibly plenty of the processual marks in the end result: corrections and alterations, regrets and effacements with lines overwritten on objects, "dirt," "graphic noise," almost illegible written notes, all of which become an intrinsic part of the expressive matter of his work. If a figure can be perfectly delineated in its contours, perhaps a shadow or an idea of colouring will be rendered by a seemingly rushed bunch of scribbles. This creates a paradoxical relationship with the reader, a contrast with what happens narratively and textually (in a narrower sense), given that this degree of "visual" or "graphic noise," of "dirtiness," augments the distance between narration and *narrataire*.[59] Autobiography sometimes leads readers to believe that there is no distance between art and life, which consequently can lead to abusive interpretations or a false feeling of familiarity with the author himself while a historical person. These marks of incompleteness and dirtiness, then, can act as a distance-making correction of such an attitude. If "internally" (to the stories) perhaps an illusion could be created that there would be no frontier between the tangible and sensible life of everyday and that life that solely emerges and is developed within a work of art, and that only can be expressed through it, these visual strategies of making as visible as possible its surface create an external side in relation to which there can be only a *Verfremdungseffekt*.

Throughout the years of 2005-2006, not least than five A Mula-related fanzines were put out: *Paint Suck's*, *Lamb-Hãert* and *Hum, Hum! Estou a ver...*, *Estou careca e a minha cadela vai morrer!*, and *Cospe aqui*.[60] Following the freest path as possible, these objects were solely guided by a "will to compile drawings, stories and other stuff that were 'lost' in the homes and studios of a few friends of ours" (my translation), as the editors Mendes and Carneiro write in one of the presentation texts.[61] This has always been one of

[59] Not to mention issues of materiality and of making visible the dimension of artefactuality of comics.

[60] The first title is in English originally, the second is a phonetic pun on "Lick you" in Portuguese, and the following are translatable as "Mm, mm, I see...," "I'm bald and my bitch is going to die!" and "Spit here".

[61] *A minha cadela*, etc., n.p.

the possible functions of zines, to erect new monumental buildings out of ruins, something that unites them to the work of Piranesi or Walter Benjamin, but at the same time they are also an active, and outspoken critique triggered by the "disenchantment with the local, national and international artistic milieu" (Mendes and Carneiro, idem). In this sense, the fanzines become a platform for the discussion of a world with which they may or may not have liaisons. In Portugal, a similar relationship between seemingly iconoclast, cheaply-produced comics publications and the visual arts circuit has an older reference, with the 1980s *A Vaca que veio do espaço* ("The Cow that Came from Space") and *Facada mortal* ("Deadly Knife Blow") by Alice Geirinhas, João Fonte Santa and Pedro Amaral, who would later become the collective Sparring Partners, a group with many high-profile participations within the artworld. To a certain extent, this sort of effort do not amount to much, given the fact that rarely, if ever, will their criticism reach the ears and eyes of the appointed "goals," but politically this positioning informs the very works gathered on these pages. And, in any case, whether considering the collection of works gathered within their pages or solely each artist's individual contribution, these publications create "temporary autonomous zones," as the editors write (in *Cospe aqui*), following Hakim Bey.

This will allow us to do a double reading of Mendes' work, first as singular participations, isolated and concentrated, and then as parts of a continuous text. In the pages of these first A Mula fanzines, Mendes participated mostly with singular sight-sized drawings, in which both his virtuosism (quite influenced by the photo-based, highly realistic paintings of Arlindo Silva, a fairly known painter in Portugal, Mendes' roommate at the time)[62] but also the noisy traces of his processes are visible. These scenes include also speech balloons or written notes that try to capture snippets of the conversations that took place then, and although they may be organised according to a chronological or axiological order, that is to say, imposing a necessarily narrative or sequential order,[63] they are always already, following Mendes' words in *Estou careca*, "as pages of a comics journal in which at least one year of common life [with the portrayed people] is narrated." Although drastically different from Fabrice Neaud's *Journal* project, Mendes presented from the start narratological, ethical and representational strategies that enabled one to compare him to the French artist.

---

62 In fact, Silva's 2005 painting *Doi-doi* ("Boo-boo") depicts Mendes bleeding.

63 In fact, many of them would be presented in an exhibition in Coimbra, and a book would be published: *Anos Dourados* (Mundo Fantasma: 2013). Although in the blog there is no particular distinct strategy to present the "strips" and the "drawings," the inclusion of some in the *Diário Rasgado* book allows us to imagine some possibility of integration into the continuous work, more on which below.

Quite often, we consider the publication of a "book" as a proof of maturity, especially if it presents a long-form story, or at least it will seem as the confirmation of a certain level of success, commercial, critical or otherwise.[64] In Portugal, however, the chance of being published, especially in commercially consolidated houses, is not clear-cut for comics, and if we would look for solely "officially" published books, we would surely overlook many interesting things. In fact, it was only in 2011-2012, especially with the publication of *Diário Rasgado* in book form [Image 3] that Mendes had a little more public attention, including the specialised media, despite the fact that all the material in the book had been published before, if in different form and order. But to say that the author is publishing the "same" material in the zines, the blog, *The Chinese Will Deliver the Pandas* and *Diário Rasgado* is, on the one hand, a little deceiving, for they imply different textual arrangements, and on the other, points out to that idea of ongoing work across all titles, being *Diário Rasgado* the hypothetical general title. In fact, Mendes' work is quite similar to the case of an author such as Edmond Baudoin, of which each and every book, no matter how different they may be from one another (fiction *versus* non-fiction, travelogue *versus* autobiography, childhood memoir *versus* diary, self-centred *versus* focused on specific family members, collaborative *versus* solo, adaptation *versus* graphic journal), gravitate around the same conceptual core, which we could name either "subjectivity," "memory," "self," but which are always not only open to representation but also to revision and re-presentation.[65] As I have written elsewhere about Baudoin, it is as if Mendes' every work contributed to a "continuous poem."[66]

If the word "diário" (lit. "diary") points out a sort of "proof of effort," a rhythmic capacity of searching amongst the many events in one's life their condition of writable or textuable (in comics) possibility, to see them as worthy of being transformed and transmitted, the adjective "rasgado" ("torn" or "rent") forces us to rethink that view. They may be referring to pages that, after all, are not worthy of being recuperated by memory.

---

[64] This would lead to the distinction that in some academic circles is proposed between graphic novels and comics, and also comments on the blatant lack of criticism on works that, independently of their remarkable nature, are published in formats "under the radar": fanzines, magazines, newspapers, some web-based platforms, etc.

[65] In Baudoin's case, for instance, one can see this via the recurring leitmotiv of the "child with the finger in his mouth," starting in *Passe le temps*, it will be found in *Derrière les fagots*, *Le premier voyage*, *Le voyage, Le chemin de Saint-Jean*, *Travesti*, *Villars sur Var* and *Éloge de la poussière*.

[66] An image taken from Portuguese poet Herberto Helder, which considers (most) all of his books as part of one single, "Continuous poem." A heavily edited anthology of his work came out in 2001: *Ou o poema contínuo*.

They are exceptions to that grace, thus they are torn off, taken from the larger corpus, sacrificed, thrown away. But we can also interpret such as a title as a form of rescue: being the diary itself an inaccessible object, not only because it does not belong to us but because it has no body within the world, these are then the only pages that are bestowed with legibility. The act of tearing pages, a somewhat violent manual movement, also puts into our minds the idea of a sheet of paper now made even more imperfect. For the adjective does not point to the actions of "cutting away," "detaching" or "separating" a page: it's to "tear" it away. One of the sides, the one attached to the quire, will end up in an asymmetrical shape, with irregular curves and spikes, perhaps a few of the sentences "incomplete," a few drawings "hurt." And imperfection is one of the characteristics of Mendes' pages, who explores slightly different styles and approaches to drawing, diverse degrees of completeness, corrected texts, and so on. It's as if the difficult task of looking at ourselves every single day in the same manner was expressed through these internal differentiations, and the act of tearing ourselves away from ourselves, so that we can look at ourselves "from the outside" (a typical principle of comics autobiography), was made possible.

Like most autobiographical authors, Mendes represents himself as a character within the diegetic world, a character only slightly more central because he appears more often, he is the centre of the focalised attention and action, and also because we follow the extra-textual pact, i.e., that the "Marco" in the strips stories is representing the author himself. Now, although throughout the history of comics there are a handful of examples of stories told from the protagonist's visual perspective, so that we see practically what the character would see through his or her own eyes, the greatest majority of comics do not do that. First-personal *visual* perspective or internal ocularization is not unheard of, it's just not common. [67] When it is used, however, what comes as a surprise is that what is given to be seen through those panels is a much narrower view than that accessible naturally to human binocular vision. The choice of representing the "inside" of the gaze is culturally inhabitual and becomes rather strange and uncomfortable.[68]

[67] We will not distinguish here fiction and non-fiction uses of this. A few examples are Windor McCay's February the 25th, 1905 strip *Dream of the Rarebit Fiend*, Will Eisner's *The Spirit* 1946 story "The Killer" (originally published in the insert dated December the 8th, 1946), Bob Powell's 1953 short story "colourama" (originally in *Black Cat Mystery* # 45). Marco Mendes also has a few stories like this.

[68] As in the quoted Eisner's story, eerily showing the inside of the orbital bones

Most (autobiographical) authors simply depict themselves in an identical plane as the rest of their characters. "A person cannot from within look at himself from outside: an ethical 'short circuit' takes place, and the only way out of this is to create a special external point of view on oneself and the world which by definition cannot coincide with the 'I-for-myself', to create, in other words, a literary hero." (Barsht 2000: 25) These words belong to Konstantin Barsht on Dostoievski's writing process, which not only studies the Russian author's writing, but also the notes and the schemas he drew as a scaffold to the writing phase. Barsht presents a dichotomy between the Russian words *lik* and *oblik*, the first one standing for a person's actual "face" and the second to its reflection, or "appearance," in a mirror. The writer gives the example of a beautiful woman putting on make-up in front of a mirror as doing something similar to a writer working on a text. Although there are significant differences, both are setting an external point of view and, according to whatever aesthetic rules and norms, are creating an ideal object, a face (the woman as an end in itself, the writer as a means to an end). According to Barsht, for Dostoievski, the face is the "personalised image of the idea": the "human facial image" (*chelovecheskii lik*, in Russian) is unique. More than that, it is "the unity of the internal (the idea) and the external (the face) in man" (2000: 23).

Hans Belting explains how "À travers ses innombrables variantes, l'habitude humaine de fabriquer des images traduit en outre les divers modes sur lesquels l'homme envisage son propre corps, ce qui conduit l'histoire culturelle des images à se refléter dans une histoire du corps qui lui est parallèle" (2004 : 35). These seemingly unrelated lines of thought converge in that which concerns me here, a representation choice that I will call the *torsion* of self-representation (of one's own body, of the I). Belting adds that "[la représentation] est à la vérité *production* d'une image corporelle qui participe d'emblée à l'autoreprésentation du corps" (original emphases; idem: 123): which means that each artist creates a body that stands for his or her own but as if it was the body of an other. Distinct from written autobiographies, where there is an immediate use of the first-person personal pronoun, in visual media, especially pictorial/graphical, the *autobiographiable I* is displaced from the base-I, both in time and space, into a I-as-S/He. The face of a person, in these circumstances, becomes closer to its Latin etymological root, the *persona*, as both the actuality of a form that exists on the positive, ideal, perfect plane (the *eidos*) and a more illusory and superficial form (the mask).

This *torsion* leads inevitably to a first degree of dissociation - after all, we don't see our own faces except if indirectly through reflexes, and a drawing is a reflex that goes through more personalised filters and channels than, say, photography. But as I've already mentioned and will deal again later, the way Mendes engages with numerous genres and humours makes him create secondary dissociations within his autobiographical project. Catherine Mao talks of a "flottement identitaire", and points out Jean-Christophe Menu and Manu Larcenet as examples (Mao 2013). However, this problematisation has been present ever since autobiographical comics emerged, if we accept a specific parentage (see Grove 2004; Hatfield 2005: 128 and ff.; Chaney 2011, Refaie 2013).. Robert Crumb, in "The Many faces of Robert Crumb" in *XYZ Comics* (1972), deals in a few pages with the issue of subjectivisation, self-presentation and social masking. Aline Kominsky's "The Bunch Plays with Herself" (published in *Arcade Comics* no. 3, Print Mint, 1975) can be considered a sort of nexus or origin point for the way the human body would be considered throughout most autobiographical comics, especially by women authors. The body is, after all, "perhaps the most awkward materiality of all" (Highmore: 119), so to explore it opens up quite affecting vistas of self-portraying, self-reflecting and self-constructing. Justin Green explores the same issues within a framework of exploring trauma, which allows for the presence of fantasy and non-realist strategies in autobiographical narratives (Moura 2015). And Harvey Pekar's entire oeuvre opens up the issue of style and representation.

But let us go back to the question of the *torsion*. The figuration of the events and actions experienced or seen by the autobiography protagonists is not made then through an ocular imitation of the empirical, human visual perspective, a total "subjective gaze," as it were, but through a transformation or reduction of the protagonists into characters, similar to all others. We should also take in account that the imitation of these experiences has *less* to do with the Greek concept of *mimesis* - to a certain extent mirror-like, a simulacrum of something that is different from itself, and is outside of itself, save for the fact that it mimics its movements and, above all, its looks (in Peircean terms, it would be the equivalent of an *icon*) -, but rather as something closer to the Christological *imitatio*, an *incarnation*, an irruption of the body's originary image. In the case of the Classical *imitatio*, it is Christ's body that becomes the resonant body that emerges from within the empirical body of the imitator; in the case of autobiographies, it is the fictive body in relation to the "real, empirical body" of the authors. What is more, it also creates a reflection body in the "inside" of the diegetic space, the space of representation (Didi-Huberman 2007: see

especially chapter II.[69] This is the first dismembering between the observing "I" and the observed "I": between subject and object, subject and predicate.

There is a supplementary reason for this creation as it relates to human memory, and the way memory itself is constituted, as something removed from time and space, a "vertical zenith" that unites two events that, despite being disconnected causally and temporally, establish a sort of *figuram implere* relationship that ends up by bonding them together, the "former heralding and promising the latter, the latter realizing the former" (Auerbach 1968: 84). The two "Is" would correspond to those two times, confounded with one another. The author creates a puppet to represent him or herself in order to revisit the memory he or she is retelling.

This torsion has an important narratological consequence. It relates not only to issues of identity (as Lejeune's "autobiographical pact" amalgamates author, narrator and character) but also to narrative *function*: the instance that organises visual facts and the represented events (Bal 1991: 163 ff.; Lejeune 1975 and 1980). In a certain way, this displacement of the *I*'s representation allowed (if not forced; see Fehrle 2011 for a riveting discussion about what feels "natural" or not in the comics medium, in contrast with literature.) by comics is similar to Kaja Silverman's "heteropathic identification," which we've come across before. For Silverman, who bases herself on Max Scheler, this identification takes place when "the subject identifies at a distance from his or her proprioceptive self" (Silverman 1996: pg. 23). So instead of identifying the Other as an "I," naturalizing it and absorbing it, it is rather a going out of oneself, an alienation of oneself, as if it was an Other. Empathy, rather than sympathy, ensues, as we've seen following LaCapra's interpretation.

In turn, this little detour reminds me of the etymological development, discussed by Georges Didi-Huberman (who quotes from Edgard B. Tylor's *Primitive Culture* in 2002: 57), verified between "witness" and "superstition". As in French, the Portuguese word for witness, "testemunha," is derived from the ancient Latin juridical term *testis, -is*, which refers to a third party that would intervene, disinterestedly, in a dispute between two parties. A synonym of *testis* was *superstes [superstō]*[70], which was used to label anyone who

[69] It would be interesting to confront this with writer Grant Morrison's concept of a "fiction suit" (2011: 117).

[70] In Festus' *Glossaria Latina* (394, 37) it is written "superstites testes præsentes significat." All of these etymological developments and sources derived from entries for *superstō* and *testis* in A. Ernout and A. Meillet's *Dictionnaire Étymologique de la langue latine. Histoire des mots*. 4ª ed. Librairie C. Klincksieck:

had observed or experienced something from beginning to end, not very differently than the generic use we have today of the action "to witness" something. Literally that verb means "to be" (*stare*) + "on top of" (*super*), but a more usual meaning was "to make something last," "to preserve" or "that which survives"[71]. In any case, in several modern languages, such as Portuguese and English, it would originate the word *superstição* or *superstition*.[72] It is as if an observation that one inherits from the experienced (a *testemunho*, an act of witnessing) has to necessarily be transformed into something that could be doubted by someone else (as a superstition). A space that would store everything that others may not believe in, not because it's fantastic or incredible, but because it is *outside* the experience of others. The authors I will refer to, especially those who use autobiography or something close to it (Mendes, Carneiro, Tiago Baptista) are not above that which is told, but *outside* it, bringing thus an incredibly strong bond again between those two ancient words: on the one hand, by telling about themselves, they draw themselves as if from the outside (*above themselves*) as a strategy that allows for those experiences, those observations, that retel life, to appear once again in a calmer, more soothing way so that, on the other hand, they can be presented as in a juridical case, disinterestedly, as in a court (with *witnesses*). Finally, they become as a *third* party that testifies, talking of themselves as if of someone else: *here's what happened*, *ecce homo*, *you be the judge*. What was witnessed is shown in a way that it will survive, that it will live again, through its remembrance, its reading.

Theorists such as John Paul Eakin (2004) and Leigh Gilmore (2001), among others, helps us to think of autobiography as a construction of the self, an imposition of form (and order and coherence) on an unstoppable, form-less flow. "When we talk about ourselves," writes Eakin, "and even more when we fashion an I-character in an autobiography, we give a degree of permanence and narrative solidity - or 'body', we might say - to otherwise evanescent states of identity feeling. We get the satisfaction of seeming to see ourselves see, of seeming to see our selves. That is the psychological gratification of autobiography's reflexiveness, of its illusive teller-effect" (Eakin 2004: 129).

As many contemporary artists, Mendes is well aware of the tradition into which he integrates himself. Although we have discussed the generalised lack of memory of comics,

Paris 1960. Tome II: pgs. 653-654 and 689.

[71] It is in Plutarch that the use as "being a survivor" appears.

[72] This time around, it is in Cicero that this word assumes a meaning as opposed to a religious vision, in the sense of "superfluous practices," even though it has popular usage roots.

Mendes belongs to a generation more informed about the long development of comics as an art form, as well as for working in alternative circuits are able to draw from the most diverse sources, both in geographical and historical terms as well as where genres and styles are concerned. Therefore, it is not difficult to inscribe Mendes in a long "family" that would include the North American precursors of autobiographical comics such as Harvey Pekar and Justin Green, to all the contemporary artists working in that "genre," as well as the European line which started with Gotlib and Giraud-Moebius (a handful of stories of the late 1970s) and would reach F. Neaud and David B. via Baudoin and many others. More specifically, Mendes' self-derision and occasional humour would bring him closer to Joe Matt, especially when the author-as-character addresses his readers directly (making us respect forcefully the role of the encoded reader, Genette's *narrataire*) in order to frankly expose all his faults (physical, economic, professional, sexual, in relationships, etc.). But where Joe Matt reaches an excessive humour, of almost absurd caricature, towards which his highly stylised graphic approach, influenced by classical American "bigfoot" children's comics, contributes, so that according to the good old rhetoric rules of *captatio benevolentiae* we "forgive" those character imperfections, Mendes does not seem to ask that reaction from his readers. This does not mean that Mendes abdicates completely excessive humour. He does use it. His work is quite often informed by imagetic clichés (the cover of the fanzine *Carlitos*, created in 2008 with then-girlfriend Lígia Paz,[73] shows him as a caveman, and *Chinese* as a BDSM "slave" to a dominatrix), and introduced several degrees of metamorphosis away from realism to escape the "real" weight of his confessions, but they are at one time exceptional as they also help opening up an even more sincere, bare exposition of life that aims to create a certain distance from the supposed vicariousness or identification of the reader. Running the risk of repeating this too often, *empathy* is welcome but not abusive *identification*. Even if in a wholly different context (historiography), but reconnecting with some of the notions presented before, LaCapra understands empathy as "a form of virtual, not vicarious, experience related to what Kaja Silverman has termed heteropathic identification, in which emotional response comes with respect for the other and the realization that the experience of the other is not one's own" (2001: 40).

Mendes, when he mixes "fiction lines," very different among themselves, does not disrupt a sort of *basso continuo* in all his comics, which are quite melancholic, actually.

[73] Although this may seem an unnecessary biographical information, it is in fact a in-text information. It is Paz the woman represented in the covers of both *Carlitos* and *Chinese*.

If we look at the cover, we can almost discern this elegiac tone. The sullen colour scheme contributes to it immediately, but also the fact that a date is presented right in front of the name of the author seems to point to something gloomy. Moreover, the picture is that of a plane departing, but one is not sure if it's related to the protagonist or someone else, or if that person or persons are leaving or returning somewhere. Even if there may be a confirmation within the diegesis, the feeling brought about in the cover is isolated from the matter within. In fact, we will discover that the plane is Lili's, Marco's girlfriend, who leaves to Barcelona to study, and that the book has their relationship as its centre, even if not always focused on it. The book even hints at a sort of structuring arch around it. It opens more or less with the new girlfriend entering Marco's life, it follows their passions and tensions, and finishes with the relationship's end and its consequences. The gravitational pull and pressure of this relationship seems to be felt in everything else in the book, even when there is no direct connection whatsoever.

One could go so far as saying that the "narrative heart" of *Diário Rasgado* is precisely this relationship, its central trauma, but the "small traumas" that are explored throughout its pages go beyond that love story. As I've mentioned, each "strip" can be read individually as a singular unit. Many are the ones who address other daily problems: unemployment or low wages, lack of security in the future, a difficulty in dealing with overwhelming odds in relation to broader politics (expressed through exposure and comment on news), ageing and health, family life, and so on. Moreover, there is a constant melancholy portrait of daily life in Porto or elsewhere, with a particular incidence on differences in economic comfort, showing homelessness, hunger, poverty, quite often in comparison to Marco himself. There are moments when he and his friends complain about their lack of opportunity of fortune, but there are others when he contrasts some of his breaks in comparison to other people (as when he drives past a man looking for food in trash bins). These "small traumas" are pervasive, constant and paint the whole ambient of the project, instead of amassing themselves into a coherent nucleus that could be pinpointed as the "traumatic event" Mendes would "work through" with his project.

When referring to *Maus*, Ernst Van Alphen writes: "The cartoon medium is of course heavily invested with the marker of fictionality and imaginativeness" (1997: 22). However, we can surely yield to the notion of a open-ended continuous gradient curve of those markers. That is to say, something akin to Scott McCloud's pyramid of the comic universe (1993: 50 ff.), but that would take in consideration at all times the inherent formal

specificities and affordances of comics, and not solely the superficial, figurative, stylistic approach of the given artist. As it is known, one of *Maus*' markers is the use of theriomorphic humans (and not anthropomorphised animals, as usually described), which points to the fact that "in the visual realm Spiegelman chooses multiple mediations, [but] in the aural, by contrast, he seems to seek absolute unmediated authenticity" (Hirsch 2011: 26). On the other hand, Marco Mendes seems to follow a realistic approach to drawing, but quite often opening up room for fantastical representations, that have no relationship whatsoever with the "documentary approach" that that visual style seems to promise.

Let's take a look at one particular image [Image 4].

The very first page published in the *Diário rasgado* book deserves a close reading of its own. It's a full-page, text- and title-less image. Let us remember that each of these pages were originally "units" with no particular order (except the chronological one of their publication on the blog), so it becomes quite significant that this one was chosen to open the book, which purportedly sets a more definitive reading order to the texts, or actually fuses them into *one text*. This image shows an interior scene, the living room of the protagonist's home. In it, we perceive three fragments of human (male) bodies: a hand entering the image at the upper left corner, holding a half-smoked cigarette, a leg that crosses all along the lower margin, entering from the right towards the middle, and, slightly hidden, the face of someone lying down to his side. On the one hand, taking in account the diegetic and visual information - whether brought from the blog or caught later on the book - it is fairly easy to identify these body parts as belonging to the three men living in that house: Marco, Didi Vassi and Palas. However, we also believe that there is a (even blatant) intertextual reference, on the visual track, as it were, to Guido Buzzelli's *Zil Zelub.*

In fact, the very first page of the Italian author's most famous book [Image 5] opens up showing the protagonist - himself a self-fiction avatar of Buzzelli - in a seemingly conventional page, with his body judiciously framed so that only parts or fragments appear, but making us believe it's just a question of composition and angles choice (although the last panel seems awkward). Only when we turn this page we will discovery that the previous pseudo-superficial physical fragmentation was actually literal (in the fiction), as Zelub's legs and arms are detached from his trunk, with a will of their own. So it begins the story of *Zil Zelub*. Now, when we turn the pages of *Diário Rasgado*, we will not find any kind of diegetic confirmation of this, but could we still speak of the *fragmentation* of a single body? The fact that Mendes' uses often, knowingly or not, intertextual references in

the creation of some of his compositions (to which we will return later) will allow us to pursue this thought. Even though such a fragmentation is not explored literally, imaginatively or diegetically in Mendes' book, there is a sort of its presence in degree, for the disposition of the bodies "judiciously framed" and showing a "superficial physical fragmentation" leads us to the idea that there is some exploration of the dissociation of the books' "Marco."[74]

In almost all comics' autobiographies there is always a degree of *dédoublement*, a doubling of the empirical person into "author" and "protagonist," as we've seen with the notion of *torsion*. There is no difference in *Diário*, of course. On the one hand, obviously, this doubling is graphic, for authors more often than not represent themselves in a manner quite distinct from their empirical cognitive perceptions (the first-person perspective). On the other hand, and in relation to this book in particular, Mendes has a note at the back of the book stating that everything present in the book belongs to the world of fiction, but perhaps that is the biggest fiction of all. Even if we accept the fact that we are not before the most basic of autobiographies - there never is one, but let us accept, for argument's sake, the existence of a *zero degree* of it -, we will be in the presence of an auto-fiction, or an auto-fantasy, in the sense that the author does create a double of himself, an avatar, a "fiction suit" that he employs then in the fictions he creates, but in which all the elements will have connections, even if not direct, point-by-point, to his experienced reality. I have no wish to slide into that unproductive sense that would consider every work of art as autobiographical, but I have no wish either to simply restrict my considerations to those texts where one would detect Lejeune's "pact."

In the conclusion of her essay quoted above, Christine Mao points out how autobiographical comics "solve" the questions posed by self-representation. Not by self-analysis, but by a movement towards the external, and a double one at that, first of all through a "uniform, that of the comics' character," and secondly through a third party (a muse, a lover, a relative, a landscape; 2013: paragraph 33), in relation to which a dialogue ensues that will focus the self-construction of the artist (idem: § 24 and ff.). Once again, Mendes' strategy in this last point is quite close to Baudoin's.

[74] Evariste Blanchet, in his reading of the same scene in Buzzelli's book, speaks how the "grotesque and extravagant character of the scene paradoxically puts into question the judgment that was bestowed upon the last panel of the first page [which seemed to present an anatomically wrong drawing]: we are so far from a objectively observable physical reality that the absence of realism cannot be understood simply as an error of clumsiness" (my translation; 2003: 44-45).

Moving gazes..

Before reading the next "unit", we must take in account a speficic narratological technique. Mendes uses quite often panels with subjective points of view, where the shot/reverse shot technique reveals who the observer of the previous scenes is. Although there are a few cases in which we see a framed scene as if from the character's own point of view, it is more usual to see the character's back, or the back part of the head, etc., as if guiding us with the position of his body. In fact, for Martin Schüwer, this is what's called "half-subjective panels," which he finds, drawing from Deleuze,

> "[m]ore effective [as] a narrative technique in which 'the camera does not merge with the person or remain outside her, but is with her' (...). Thus we can see characters and relevant parts of their surrounding environment at the same time, while their feelings colour the scene - in other words, subjective and objective image merge." (Fehrle 2010: 293)

But this can be achieved in different manners as well.

A case of point of this sort of focalisation to instil a certain "inheritance of melancholy" is found in the story/unit "Afrodite" [Image 6]. This is one of the many strips that Mendes creates with no verbal text, which forces the reader to deduce in a more profound and personal manner the degree of emotion and experience that is expressed than in those cases where dialogues, captions, jokes, etc., can centre things in a more superficial communicability, that is to say, much is inferred from what is said (and little else, but this is extremely rare). Although we can attempt at describing as fully as possible this strip, engaging in an ekphrastic exercise, it would be rather difficult to be wholly precise about the feeling that *desire* is present in the fourth panel. The naked body of the model is depicted in the first three panels, although in the third indirectly (or even in a third degree, given the fact it shows a *drawing of a drawing*); in the fourth panel, the young woman, if it is the same character, is no longer "the model." Marco is acting like a drawing instructor, and all his actions, hypothetical words, gestures, and at-ease attitude in the studio show the power he has over both the students and the model. He is the attention focus who "moulds" her body in the perception of the students. In the first panel he makes a broad gesture as if presenting her whole body, in the second he makes a framing gesture, and in the third it is his hand holding the pen, as if showing his student how to draw. In

each of these panels non-natural, excessive, "energy" lines converge towards the central body of the woman, which also chromatically is represented in some sort of underlying contrast (white against grey in the first panel, black with white contour highlights in the second, with thick contour lines in the third). Moreover, it is significant that in all three panels, Marco's look (or gaze) is never directed towards the model. In the fourth panel, there is an insurmountable distance: there is a clear distinction between inside and outside, the woman seems to protect herself and walks away toward the dark part of the panel, while Marco, apparently relaxed, smokes a cigarette leaning against the threshold, and follows her with his gaze. It's true that we cannot see his eyes, covered by the spectacles, shadows and distance, but the inclination of his body and head helps us inferring that. If these scenes can work in isolation as an exchange of gaze-lines, desire, representation, and masculine and feminine identity and agency subjectivisations, within the narrative economy and ordering (quite distinct from that presented throughout the blog's posting) of *Diário* it also gains other meanings.

The strip is found *after* Lili splits with Marco, and it's found *before* another strip called (and about a) "flirt." Moreover, the immediate strip after "Afrodite" shows a story in which Marco visits a prostitute and has sex with her. In the first panel we can barely see the face of the prostitute but it is very similar to that of Lili. This strip is called "Pesadelo" ("Nightmare" [Image 7]), and, point in fact, a first unpublished draft was entitled "Pesadelo contigo" ("A nightmare with you" [Image 8]). This was published in the blog, but removed a few days later (author, personal communication). So several complicated lines merge in each of these relationships. Is the feminine character that comes about afterwards, with whom Marco "flirts," the model? Is the sexual dream a memory or a projection/desire?

The author does not focus upon the Marco-Lígia relationship in the same analytical or clinical vein that, say, Jeffrey Brown, Joe Matt and Chester Brown do in their respective works. He rather dilutes that relationship in the rest of his life, as represented in *Diário rasgado* - sharing his apartment with the roommates, his professional life, his family, and his quotidian. It is then the absence of Lígia/Lili that points toward a mourning that influences all other (subsequent) scenes and episodes, inclusively all those that could be considered as completely unrelated to that relationship (a few examples are the strips called "Águas passadas," "Domingo à noite" "Jantar," and, as we've seen, "Afrodite"). There is also another theme that could pointed out to be the dislocated core of the book, and which is quite evident in "Saudade," and in a few other stories that were not included in the book.

So the book, or all the comics' work of Mendes, could be seen as a process of "cure," of transforming the memory of those relationships and all those moments into text and, as soon as they exist as texts, they can be structured in such a way that they will have a narrative arch, a resolution, a closure. Perhaps ironically, as if confirming a formula, and emphasizing a notion of a conventional narrative arch, the book returns in the end to the opening scenes, with young men of a disillusioned generation, deprived of hope, sharing a low-priced place, and abandoning themselves to the easy pleasures of drinking, smoking pot, going out at night and engaging in sessions of ogling at and commenting upon the opposite sex and making cheap jokes. This seemingly defeatist attitude, however, it could be argued, may be a certain political resistance to the seriousness, but hypocritical attitude of the hegemonic society, which it seems to impose on every single discourse. Or to put it in other words, as if the condition to have a dialogue was always already a submission to certain "rules," a right to have one's own voice only at the price of speaking only in a certain manner. So these rude and marginal behaviours would act counter to that hegemonic, normalised discourse. In this respect, it is quite important to understand also that the author does not inscribe himself outside of his own political-social context, even if he does not assume an explicit discourse upon it (as, say, Neaud does). However, if we isolate the moments when all the characters refer to their own jobs, their professional expectations, careers, economical and social situations, or they comment (more or less embedded by judgement values, more or less humorous) about other people, who may be either representatives of a certain idea of social normalization or of the pariahs the protagonists themselves stand for, in the end there is a certain politicised ambient, informed by left wing politics, unimpressed by the discourses of a supposed "success," the "compulsory entrepreneurship" or the "unavoidable economic conditions" that seem to typify capitalist contemporaneity. This ambiguity mirrors a pervasive social disenchantment of these characters – above all, the protagonist – and acts upon what Sianne Ngai calls "ugly feelings," which I will explore more in the last chapter.

It is worth it to step out of the works published within the *Diário rasgado* book collection, and comprehend how every single image created by Marco Mendes contributes to this "Continuous poem" idea. The image I would like to consider was drawn for the Portuguese Communist Party newspaper, *Avante!* (issue no. 1953, May the 5th, 2011 [Image 9]), as part of a group of comics and illustration artists that were invited to participate in this commemorative issue of May the 1st, creating images that made reference to the International Worker's Day or to any form of resistance against the liberal policies that

made themselves felt, evermore-so, in the country (usually described as "inevitabilities," which is a polite way to say that there is no room for their public discussion). One of the things that one must understand in order to read this image is that in the period immediately after the 25 de Abril, many, if not all of the left wing parties (PCP included) created many colourful murals scattered in the cities of Portugal, some of which were maintained for decades, almost as unofficial monuments (that is to say, there were no active policies neither to keep and restore them or to efface them) but also that, coincidentally or not, they began to be painted over around the late 2010s.[75] The author thought about them when he decided to create this image (personal communication), but there was one other "monument" probably in the back of his mind. Even if Mendes did not actively and explicitly mentioned it, there's an echo of Goya's *3 de Mayo de 1808* (1814) [Image 10]. There are quite a number of similar elements in the composition, from disposition of figure and ground and the objects in the visual plane to the diagonal line that divides obliquely the field, the relationship between the walls the half-hidden background, and the colour schema, especially the bright, contrasting yellow. But the very atmosphere and the political lesson of Goya's famous painting also seems to resonate in Mendes image.

Historically, May the 1st marks the 1886 Chicago Haymark affair, but as a commemorative date (as in other countries, it is a holiday in Portugal, but it was illegal before the 1974 Revolution) it stands for the worker's ongoing struggle and resistance against capitalism, a struggle which seems to be increasingly questioned by the advancements of the late capitalist neoliberal policies as they are applied in countries such as Portugal, usually disguised as "necessary structural reforms," or whatever doublespeak and lingo terms are used.[76] More often than not these words are more or less vague, or at least not direct (as are "budget cuts," "sackings," "tax raises," "subsidies termination," etc.), but they do point to a problem felt at the moment, which is that it is more difficult now to even *imagine* that life be better in the future. While the generations that lived through April the 25th actually saw political openness, and during the 1980s and 1990s witnessed European integration and a raise of material riches, today even the prospects for graduates,

[75] See the site of the Centro de Documentação 25 de Abril of the Universidade de Coimbra, which has several exhibition nuclei, as for instance: http://www1.ci.uc.pt/cd25a/wikka.php?wakka=coleccaoConceicaoNeuparth. [Last access April the 10th 2014].

[76] Especially more so after Portugal tapped the European Financial Stabilisation Mechanism in 2011, which lead to the draconian measures of the so-called "Troika" (the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund) agreement.

for instance, in getting a job, moving to their own place, and even afford to have children, is not promising.

Goya's painting shows the massacre of the victims of Napoleon's imperial machine, and it had a ground-breaking role in European painting, in the way it represented war, but it has a close relationship with Goya's own engravings *Los desastres de la guerra* (1810-1820) and, through these, with Jacques Callot's *Les grandes misères de la* guerre (1633).[77] The connection of these lines, on the one hand artistic and on the other hand thematic-political, will suit Marco Mendes' own continuous work, and its convergence - if we return to that idea of a "united poem," "oeuvre" - is quite telling. For instance, it is not innocent that the "change" operated in Mendes' image turns the killer platoon into an abandoned, shattered car. The idea of the "April murals" worn not only by the weather and the years but also by neglect, political vandalism and the short memory of the Portuguese, is confirmed by the worn-out image on the wall. In the interior of this "fiction," it is an actual mural, and not a group of people in a demonstration in that place. But at the same time it is as if their insistent, surviving and confronting presence creates the possibility of a resistance: in the materiality of the drawing itself, in the matter's own fictionality, they are actually paper people who are *still (or finally) demonstrating* in that space.

This divide can be read as Jacques Rancière distinction between "police" and "politics." For Rancière, the activity known as politics is not only an "exercise of power or the deciding of common affairs," but actually the pre-requisite that such a (notion of) common exists, that such a common is symbolised (2004b: 6). The two ways of symbolising the common is, on the one hand, the totalising, function-making and appropriateness-deciding powers of the police, and on the other hand, "politics" [*politique*] proper (for Rancière), "which calls into question the divisions of common and private, visible and invisible, audible and inaudible. This calling into question presupposes the action of supplementary subjects, subjects that are not reducible to social groups or identities but are, rather, collectives of enunciation and demonstration surplus to the count of social groups" (idem). The image thus complicates the agency of the characters depicted, which can be seen as both powerless (nothing but drawings on a crumbling, forgotten wall) and empowered (by being active *as drawing* in between the two separated spaces, that of privilege and that of the end result of capitalism's planned obsolescence).

[77] See Chute 2016 for a discussion of these engravings within a context of Comic Studies.

Other elements also seem to concur with that phantasmatic notion that at one time is already dissipating but also barely rising. The nocturnal scene presents two secondary colour areas, the brighter, electric blue of the "private condominiums" (whose replacement of Goya's church is not by chance, surely, as markers of property, privilege but also as potential protecting spaces that are denied to the people depicted) and the smudged green of the dilapidated car, as if we were before the life cycle of contemporary capitalism's goods - judiciously inverted in terms of visual fields -, and cut apart by the wall (also old, unfinished or damaged, but insistent), both primary colours imposing a sort of daylight upon the nocturnal scene. These effects are done by Mendes' method, which is not "clean" nor linear. Many of the "mistakes" or "first choices" are still visible in the final image, as well as the marks of materials such as grainy crayons, pastel pencils, and so on. This can also have a political reading: as Rancière writes, "In politics, subjects act to create a stage on which problems can *be made visible* – a scene with subjects and objects, in full view of a 'partner' who does not 'see' them" (2004b: 7, my emphasis). By making these issues and the preparatory marks visible, as well as part of his own continuous text, which will still be read in general terms as an autobiography, Mendes is integrating these addresses to other people in his very own subjectification process.

These formal choices of making this "graphic noise" visible and integrated in the final art stand as if Marco Mendes subsumed the need and the urgency of his creative gesture solely to its mechanical reproductibility, as if that was the true and only life of the image, with no care whatsoever towards the original art, or more so, to even consider it, the original, as an artwork in itself. Is this to be understood as a critical practice that hampers and contests the reification of the drawing itself as commodifiable and salable? As is usual in the author, who commingles and criss-crosses personal memory and collective history, autobiography and fantasy, his self-representation avatar is found right on the foreground of the mural's scene. He is the bald, bespectacled man carrying the red international flag on the right, crossing his arm with that of the miner, which recalls one also of the many graphical permutations that Portuguese graphic artist and painter João Abel Manta created during the Revolutionary period [Image 11].

We could also argue, however, that Mendes-the-author does not wish for Mendes-the-character to occupy the same "moral place" of the victims in Goya's painting. In the fictitious mural, the place of the white-clad man of Goya's masterpiece is taken by Mendes' avatar, with his black turtle-neck sweater and his horn-rimmed glasses, almost as a

caricature of the intellectual, somewhat dissimilar from the "proletarian masses" represented by the other characters. Still, he wants to be present as an ally of the struggle. In the mural, all the character's mouths are opened, as if shouting. Although it's blatant that they are found in a fragile support and place (these are not the glorious and utopian masses of Delacroix' *La Liberté guidant le peuple*), their voices can still be heard. Again we resort to Ranciére: "Politics is not some age of humanity which is to have been realised today. Politics is a local, precarious, contingent activity – an activity which is always on the point of disappearing, and thus perhaps also on the point of reappearing" (2004b: 8).

As we can see, apart from the tradition of comics, we can also inscribe Marco Mendes in other visual art fields. Painting is one of them, and perhaps it is not too far-fetched to look at his work, especially in its social dimensions, as connected to Courbet, who wanted to capture reality without resorting to any filters of idealization or without beautifying it (which does not mean necessarily to avoid fictive elements). Placed in the 21st century, Mendes' post-modern discourse does not allow him to deal naively with reality.[78] Point in fact, his drawing approach, its stylistic structuring, his options for a certain opaqueness of materiality, with visible processual traces, the consequent manipulation of the meaningful structures of comics (even if these look like the most simple four-panel grids), all of that are his specific gestures, concentrated, conscious of the transformation of his first "impressions of reality" into a wider texture with meanings of their own.

If reality is unattainable in itself (the numenon) it can be construed *through* the expressive and artistic tools available to the author, so that even Mendes' supposed "documentarist" approach, when it takes place, is filled with aesthetic meaning. Still, Mendes' created reality tries to give the impression, or mirror or reshape a certain idea of genuineness. His irony in relation to the inhabited spaces, the choices of self-representation, no matter how filtered they are, the "material dirtiness" of his drawings (even when there's some "digital clean-up" that flattens the materiality of the original drawings, something debated in the book), and even the integration of fantasy elements into his "real life" are but the factors that contribute towards that genuineness.

Let's take a closer look at the unworried manner with which Mendes creates his imagetic approach [see Image 12 as an example]. We will find corrections of the texts in the shape of lines scribbled above the words, the contour lines for some characters redrawn on top of the first attempt, quick gestural lines to demarcate shadow patches or volume in

[78] Which does not imply, of course, that Courbet was doing so.

certain objects, whiteout blots to mark precisely a correction (for they could be used for other purposes, such as colouring or lightning effects), the uncleanness of the areas "outside" the panel borders, the presence of Scotch tape in a few corners, and so on. All of these marks, along with the images and drawings and borders are part of the author's specific expressive tools, but they add up to a certain quality that bring some distance between Mendes and a certain classical, methodical and "clean" idea of how to create comics (an artistic method that prizes above all revisiting and remaking the original material in order to reach a final reproductive result, being perhaps *la ligne claire* its highest, most famous exponent), and, on the other hand, augment the feeling of authenticity. It reminds one of Walter Benjamin's powerful metaphor in "Die Erzahler" essay, when he talks of the mark of the storyteller on the story being similar to the "way the handprints of the potter cling to the clay vessel" (Benjamin 1969: 92).

It is necessary however, not to confuse "genuine" with "truth," the noumenic quality, the reality of events and things. That would be quite an fruitless path to follow, and that would only lead to dangerous, and unimportant, questions such as "did this *really* happened?" It is not by chance that the first story Mendes' chose to open the book (after the discussed initial, fragmentary image), "Evereste," discusses the protagonist's fantasy desire of climbing that mythic mountain in order to better look at the world, like an isolated and heroic figure similar to the one represented in Caspar David Friedrich's famous painting, *The Wanderer Above the Mists* (1818) but then having the whole book actually revealing a ground level perspective, which is still able, however, to give us back an image of the nature, the works and days of the world, and creating a certain *face,* that is to say, a ground-level, empathic access to experience.

This "noiseness" that we've been referring to of the author's materiality allows for a distancing effect. The visuality never becomes too familiar, transparent or naturalised. It does not become an illusory window into an hypothetical world, where truth could have a role to play. Quite the contrary, being in a constant mutation, its tactility, its incompleteness (from a classical perspective), its mish-mash of several visual approaches within the same page, or even the same panel, allow for another Walter Benjamin's concept to be used. In "Goethe's *Elective Affinities*," Benjamin argues that in "In the expressionless [*Ausdrucklose*], the sublime violence of the true appears" and, a little further ahead the philosopher adds that "[o]nly the expressionless completes the work, by shattering it into a thing of shards, into a fragment of the true world, into the torso of a

symbol" (Benjamin 1996: 340). As of course, Benjamin is referring to Goethe's novel, which presents itself as a whole, coherent and with a crystal clear structure. The fragmented nature of *Diário rasgado* is quite obvious, but it's not only related to certain contemporary conditions of production, as we've seen in the first chapter. That is in fact its creative context, and the author accepts it as it is, and he does not tries to hide it or disguise it. Quite the opposite, he flaunts it.

And in fact, another of the recurring traits of narratives such as these is that same fragmentary nature, its narrative disorder (in the specific sense that it does not obey strictly normative temporal and causal axes), its several types of (possible or realised) recombination, which invites the notion of circularity, and discordant rhythms. This is what E. Ann Kaplan would call "narration without narrativity" (2005: 65), which employs dream and fantasy scenes in its texture, in which the linear temporal flux is interrupted by flashbacks, quite often sudden. Mendes adds to these strategies his mode of humour, as well as the crossing with other genres of comics.

The recombination of the works is quite noticeable whether we contrast the ordering in the book with that of the previous English anthology (*Pandas*) or with the dates of their first blog's publication or even their dates of production; which are scribbled in every strip (at the end of the volume there is also a date list). If one goes through the "whole work," the "Continuous poem," the effective choices for the book upon the available material, it will bring some interesting thoughts. For example, the absence of a strip such as "¨Pesadelo" from the economy that is constructed with the book is quite revealing, as if in the book the author wanted to avoid a darker path of Marco's reaction – conscious (visiting a prostitute) or unconscious (having a nightmare) – to the breakup with Lili.

The point is that Mendes reuses or even repurposes some of his previous, "daily," singular strips as well as his first published zines' pages and subsumes them wholly to an almost adamant formal rule: the four-panel, 2 by 2 grid, as if he aimed for another sort of continuity and coherence to his production, and at the same time creates a dialogue with a specific and ages old tradition of the medium of comics, the newspaper humour strips à la Schulz, even if Mendes' punch lines and ellipses deregulate comicality and melancholy. This also bolsters the idea that more important than a supposed "truth" lies the formation, the creation, the impression of a genuineness of this(these) character(s)'s experiences, towards which we may create empathy, which in turn reserves and respects the place of the reader

and the read subjects, an insurmountable difference, to be sure, but whose second hand experience can reveal itself to be gratifying, enriching, and affective.

Marco Mendes, by working within an economy of genres and book-production that may be called "alternative," creates his *Diário* in a negotiation space of a tense balance between abdicating the "dominant fictions" (to use an expression by Kaja Silverman) but maintain some elements of narrative coherence - there are recurrent characters, one can identify minimally a space-time axis that brings some degree of cohesion to the diegesis, not matter how fragmented it is, the establishment of continuity relationships between every single "fragment" in such a way that allows for a continuous reading, and so on. Moreover, the very possibility of recombination leads one to think that an incessant search presides over the work - it could be re-launched once again in a different order, for instance -, and therefore that an ever rebuilding coherence is under way.

Chapter Four.

Miguel Rocha and the Working Through through Acting Out of History.

Before he turned to comics, Miguel Rocha (born in Lisbon, 1968) worked in the graphic arts industry, being involved in publicity and publishing. In fact, he worked for the magazine *Selecções BD*, one of those anthology weekly of comics that tried to maintain the trend of *Cavaleiro Andante* and *Tintin* in the decline of the late 1980s and early 1990s. In sharp contrast with most other Portuguese authors in contemporary times, whose first steps were taken in fanzines or collective publications, Miguel Rocha, after one very short experience, started his career with book-long projects. This would make him face immediately both the challenges and difficulties that working on a book implies, but accordingly it would also help him to achieve a capacity for regularity and perseverance that is not that common in Portugal. He has also created a children's illustrated book in collaboration with João Paulo Cotrim, and has created a number of posters, some of which for high profile events (such as the UEFA's Euro 2004 football tournament, that took place in Portugal), and some in more intimate collaborations, as the case of the poster of Montemor-o-Novo's theatre production of *Hans, O Cavalo Inteligente*, written by Francisco Campos, and that Rocha would later adapt to the comics medium. His involvement with a cultural association in Montemor-o-Novo, where he has been living for many years, has lead him to playwriting as well.

Having published more than 10 books, there's not only a wide choice of strategies, both stylistic and narrative, as well a variety between solo work, collaborative work and adaptations. From his many titles, we can mention *O enigma diabólico* (written by José Abrantes, in a sort of homage to Edgar P. Jacobs; Quadradinho 1998), *Borda d'Água* (a slightly autobiographical work reminiscent of an early Baru or Cabanès's *Colin Maillard*, for instance, and published as the 5th issue of the Lx Comics collection of the Bedeteca de Lisboa: 1999), *As pombinhas do Sr. Leitão* (Baleiazul/Bedeteca de Lisboa 1999), *Eduarda* (based on Georges Bataille's novella, *Madame Edwarda*; Polvo/Bedeteca de Lisboa 2000); *Março* (written with Alex Gozblau; Baleiazul/Bedeteca de Lisboa 1999), *Beterraba - A vida numa colher* (Polvo 2003), *Os touros de Tartessos* (written by José Carlos Fernandes; Junta de Andalucia 2004), *Salazar, agora na hora da sua morte* (written by João Paulo Cotrim; Parceria A. M. Pereira 2006), *A noiva que o rio disputa ao mar*

(again with Cotrim; C.M. Portimão 2009) and *Hans, o cavalo inteligente* (based on the play by F. Campos quoted above; Polvo 2010). He also has a handful of shorter stories published in anthology titles, written by Cotrim, as well as João Ramalho Santos and João Miguel Lameiras, and one Miguel Torga's short story adaptation ("Miura," in *Contos Contigo*; IPLB 2002).

Even risking some oversimplification, we may argue that Rocha's graphic approach, within the medium of comics,[79] has two distinct phases. A first phase could be called artisan-like or manual, in which the author tried out his hands at many different styles and tools, colour palettes and visual effects, to outstanding varied pictorial, even painterly, results. A second, starting with *Salazar*, took him into the world of digital tools, eschewing almost entirely ink on paper. This does not mean however that his own particular gestuality and figuration, his own *graphiation*, would suffer any dramatic alteration. Quite the contrary, there are many distinct traits that unite these two phases even though the creative media employed are drastically different, as we shall see. Rocha painstakingly searches for the best possible path to create a coherent work, in the best accord with the "story." He also permanently reveals an almost encyclopedic knowledge of comics' own varied tradition, not by employing direct quotes but through very subtle ways of integrating those same traditions within the mesh of his singular works. This is notable in the variety of *mise en page* choices, formats and the colouring approach, to name but a few of the dimensions.

Março, for instance, explores a radiantly varied rainbow of colours and drawing styles. Quite informed, I believe, by the work of Neil Gaiman and Dave McKean's collaborations (especially *Violent Cases, Signal to Noise* and *Mr. Punch*)[80], this book focus on an ongoing dialogue between a couple as they walk through the streets of Lisbon and visit secret places. A short yet epic travel of the two main characters through the sensuality of the five senses, each chapter has a dominant colour and varies its drawing techniques in

79

I will not address his graphic arts output.

80 None of which had been published in Portuguese at the time Rocha's book came out, which shows, once again, how Portuguese artists have to be active in their search and learning of contemporary currents beyond what is offered by the "local market." Only *Mr. Punch* came out in Portuguese through Devir in 2007.

order to both underline the specific sense and the variety of human impressions. The book was written with Alex Gozblau, another comics artist, and it prepared the powerful colour *tour de force* that would sustain *Beterraba*.

This last title was not *drawn* but *painted*, having Rocha applied acrylic directly on coloured card stock. This leads to a wonderful stark contrast between scenes of brilliant Apolinean days and eerie Dionysian nights. *Salazar*, on the other hand, was entirely made via computer. Although Cotrim and Rocha worked on thorough pencil and ink studies and drafts of the book before producing the final, publishable version, the artist used interfaces such as a graphics tablet with a stylus, which allows for the artist to use the precise same gestures as if drawing with pen, pencil or brush on paper but "translating" those same gestures immediately into digital information.[81] He also used many variegated materials such as newspaper clips, photos and fonts, but the entire book is black-and-white with a few applications of a very light dull yellow and a ghoulish, sickly greenish grey. This will be quite important for the character of the book. *Hans*, also created wholly digitally, mocks the sort of almost passionless, documentary, black-and-white police record photography. In any case, all of his works are united with a noticeable preference for a highly stylised figuration, with round shapes for the characters and the expressiveness of which is conveyed by a very small repertoire of visual changes. Digital *sfumato*, heavy and complex patterns, broad areas with pure colours or solid whites or blacks, the use of symbols or even visual metaphors, recurrent images within a story, "silent" panels, are but a few of the other traits we can find repeatedly throughout Rocha's books. Moreover, and as we will see in detail below, whether he is working by himself or adapting a text or working with a writer, there seems to be a particular penchant for characters that one way or the other become isolated from society at large: a decision the characters themselves have made, or because they were pushed into it for lack of love or understanding, or because they tread through a world with such a unique vision that they cannot find a place easily.

I will focus on two books by Miguel Rocha: *As pombinhas do Sr. Leitão* and *Salazar*.

The reason for this choice is rather straightforward. From all the books published by Rocha, these are the ones which address the recent historical past of Portugal.

[81] As one can imagine, the sophistication of these devices doubles or triples every year. Today, input devices such as these "digitizers" allows the artist to chose effects of all kinds of graphic tools and surfaces with this single instrument. That is to say, with the same tablet and stylus, one can draw as if using "graphite on paper" or "brush on watercolour paper," etc.

In contrast with the other books, they are related to a collective experience and a cultural memory based on a real context, instead of the literary, cultural imaginary, whether of Greek myth (*Tartessos*) or *maudit* literature (*Eduarda*). Although *Pombinhas* is fiction, it takes place in actual historical circumstances. *Salazar* on the other hand is a sort of symbolic biography about the man who held the reins of the Portuguese Empire for decades on end and left his particular brand on Portuguese politics and *esprit* for the years that followed (one could even say, perhaps, *until today*).

Also, these books create a productive contrast on several accounts. First of all, the fact that these books are dated from 1999 (*Pombinhas*) and 2006 (*Salazar*) gives us a good account of the artist's "development," "growth" or, more appropriately, his ever-changing yet incessant search for stylistic approaches according to the narrative project at hand. *Pombinhas* is a solo work and *Salazar* was written with João Paulo Cotrim. Moreover, while *Pombinhas* has the typical format of a French-Belgian styled a*lbum* (a softcover, approx. 32 x 24 cm, 48 pages), *Salazar* is closer to the typical "book format" that would sweep through the world of comics, i.e., the "graphic novel" format: it is approx. 24,5 x 17 cm, with 210 pages. I hope that these differences will be also productive in my close readings.

The Books, 1. *As Pombinhas do Sr. Leitão.*

This is Rocha's first book [Image 13]. The album comprises two stories, being the first announced in the book's title, and the second a shorter piece. Although I'll refer to the second story briefly below, our main concern is *Pombinhas*.[82] A short synopsis can be helpful. The main protagonist is Mr. Leitão, a short, heavyset and balding man whose profession is not clear, despite people calling him "sub-chefe" ("sub-chief," perhaps of a small administrative job). Leitão obsesses about other people's lives, lest they be Communists jeopardizing society, and sex. This obsession meets a new object of desire when he comes across a miserable mute young woman – her body is emaciated, she has no shoes - that becomes the protégé of a local restaurant owner, where Leitão is an assiduous client. The owner, Mr. Mário, wants his nephew Tozé to settle down and marry the girl, but Leitão steps in and brings the girl to his house to become his housemaid. Despite the fact that his sexual obsession for the young woman grows, Leitão is totally oblivious to the fact that his wife has turned his home into a brothel (a second time, we are lead to believe).

[82] For the sake of simplicity I'll always refer to the story itself in italics.

When Tozé tries to bring the girl away from that life, Leitão interferes and, in an act of revenge, calls the police denouncing Mário's restaurant as a "Communist burrow," and locks the girl, naked, in a room. She escapes, and Leitão follows, but Mário and Tozé catch him and are determined to beat him up. But he is saved in the last second by the local priest. By throwing corn at Leitão, pigeons fly down to eat, and the priest proclaims out loud that "it's a miracle!" People gather around and, gullible, follow the priest's lead. Mário and Tozé have no other choice but join the crowd, to avoid being arrested by the police, who've raided unsuccessfully the restaurant. But the police do not miss the chance of catching some prey, for the last image of the story shows them dragging the young woman away. The reason, briefly exposed by the police agents' dialogue: she has no shoes.

Some explanation is needed here. In 1924 a Portuguese League for Social Preventive Healthcare was founded, which would be extremely influential in fighting against some, in their minds, "anaesthetic and anti-hygienic" habits of the common people, such as walking barefoot. In 1928 a booklet would be published, which in English translation would be entitled *Bare feet – A National Shame That Must be Eradicated*, which would act as a sort of rallying cry for this "fight." In fact, as early as August 1926 a law was published (Decreto-Lei no. 12073) that forbade people from walking with no shoes within city's limits (to be determined by local authorities). In August 1947, another law (D.-L. No 36448) would reinforce this, but throughout the 1950s and 1960s there was still many people walking with no shoes on, including in the major cities, which lead to many arrests. In other words, this was but one of the many forms that the Portuguese bourgeoisie found to fight against the poorer classes, which had to be "put in its place" (preferably, away from the cities), and one of the reasons why there was popular (read, middle to upper classes) support of the new military, and later, of Salazar's government.

The author decides not to identify in any decisive way where these actions take place. There is no verbal information (despite a non-identifiable "Santa Eulália police station") and the images are too generic. One can make an educated guess and imagine this is in one of the popular *bairros* of the city of Lisbon, say Alfama, but it could also be in any other smaller town across the country. The way people dress points out to the decades of the 1930s to the 1960s, and some of the advertisement pages clipped by Leitão help us to set around the 1950s. This nondescript mapping is, I believe, meaningful, in the sense that it can stand for the larger, symbolic "interval" of democracy between 1926 and 1974. If we consider the distinctions between "acting-out" and "working-through" explained by

Dominick LaCapra (2001), discussed on chapter one, we would say that *Pombinha* acts out such a traumatic interval. The consequence of this in relation to time, especially the chronological, historical setting, is that it makes "tenses implode" (2011: 21). We will return to this below. Under this light, *Pombinhas* can be read not precisely as a specific recounting of an hypothetical historical event, but as an acting out, in its trauma-related meaning, of the oppressive nature of the decades under the Estado Novo regime.

Leitão represents a whole class of people. Not those who detained real, actual power, from the highest echelons of society or even the Government, but those many middle-men that exercised at all times, and to the largest extent as possible, whatever power they had, no matter how little. Point in fact, this is somewhat of the (perceived or real) abuse of bureaucratic-level of oppression in Portugal. The smaller the power, the more it is flaunted. Leitão is an "informant," part of the informal yet (incredibly) large network of people that acted as spies for the regime's political police, the PIDE. They were not officially employed by the police, but as "concerned citizens" they were always on the prowl for dangers against the community (purportedly following Christian family values, respecting the State, and so on). At one moment well into the narrative, Leitão calls the police station and speaks to a sergeant introducing himself as "vigilant chief."

Portuguese historian Irene Flunser Pimentel, whose work has been focusing on the "The History of PIDE," has looked into how many people sought actively to become informants of the PIDE (2011). Not all were accepted but the ones that were became extremely important in the mechanisms of the police – a sort of diluted Big Brother – and which would create, in the long run, among almost the entirety of the population, a permanent fear of being overheard or (wrongly) accused. This was a ongoing, pervasive emotion that informed the lives of the people that lived during Salazar's regime. Although Miguel Rocha is not analysing directly these issues, it is important however to bear in mind that the book addresses the idea of people who wanted to act this way, people who created a fiction they would tell themselves of being primarily concerned about certain values they wanted to uphold. But the truth is they used that "little power" for their own selfish interests. In Leitão's case, it's his lust for the young woman. José Medeiros Ferreira (an historian and the ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs in the 1st Constitutional government, between 1976 and 1978), in the public presentation of Pimentel's book, spoke of a

"quotidian petty violence" that was felt back then, especially in terms of class conversation, which is precisely what is at stake in *Pombinhas*.[83]

In the opening scenes, when Leitão is crossing a plaza [Image 14], we see several characters in the image, each with their own descriptive caption. The author plays with ellipsis, but we can read those captions as pertaining to a sort of external, objective narrator. The caption near the woman who is searching for something in the garbage reads "hunger"; the two men by the tree have captions with "hiding" and "sacked from job"; and the one near the woman with the child reads "cold." Leitão utters a single word: "marginals," as if reducing all the social problems of these people to a social-ideological choice. If these people were miserable, if was not due to society's conditions in general, but to their own "sinful" apathy and "lack of respect." It was the bourgeoisie' role and mission to "educate," if not "save," these unwashed masses.

But there is another important, retrospective, dimension in the book. And that is the relatively smooth way that the PIDE agents and their informants network were reabsorbed in the new democratic life of the country after the 1974 Revolution. Although in June 1974 a "Coordinating Service for the extinction of PIDE/DGS and LP" was created, these processes took too long, became consequently diluted in other institutions throughout the 1980s and ended with a whimper. Many of the PIDE agents themselves continued to hold administrative jobs related to the state, and many of the informants were never officially brought to court, although under the light of the democratic regime brought with the April the 25th coup and the subsequent Constitutional revision of 1982, the acts perpetrated by PIDE during the regime were considered criminal (and, under the light of the 1976 Constitution, Estado Novo's crimes do not have a statute of limitations, which means there are no time limits for a lawsuit to be filed). Pimentel, in fact, reveals how surprised she is that the names of the informants are still kept secret today, 40 years after the facts, in the official documents one can research at the archives of Torre do Tombo. One recurrent myth, a sort of whitewashing of history, is the one that emerges with the comparison of PIDE with other political polices (especially from Spain, Germany and Russia), in order to come to the conclusion that PIDE didn't kill as many people or that it was not that violent. Although numerically that may be true, the fact is that there *were* mortal victims – the candidate for President in the 1958 elections, Humberto Delgado, assassinated in 1965, is merely the most known case.

[83] "Violência mesquinha quotidiana." See URL: http://noticias.sapo.pt/lusa/artigo/ll7oBGpXtN2Rqo%2B6jqD9gg.html [last access May, 21st 2014].

In fact, Pimentel, with Luís Farinha, wrote another book entitled, in translation, "Salazar's Victims. The Estado Novo and Political Violence" (2007), in which they explore the effective violence that came to pass. Maria da Conceição Ribeiro (1996) has also penned an important tool for the comparison of the polices existent in the several regimes in Portugal and their respective legal inscription and functioning. This force parallel to the legality of the State had its own mode of operation, and although much is still understudied (Cerezales 2007), there are some known mechanisms. Not only the censorship of newspapers and radio, but also telephone tapping, violation of secrecy of one's correspondence, and the practices of denunciation, the violent repressing of strikes and demonstrations, of workers and/or students, the systematic election frauds, not to mention the imprisonment of people without any legal representation, actual torture, exile, prisoner camps, etc. All this undermines significantly the idea that "it was not that violent," and it is against this, a notion that somehow still subsists – in fact, Miguel Rocha's paternal grandfather was a political prisoner, tortured by PIDE (personal communication with the author –, that *Pombinhas* and *Salazar* act. This violence, perpetrated not only in Portugal's "continental" territory, but also in the colonies (from Angola to Macao), may be "episodic" but it does not make it unreal or unimportant. The democratic ambient post-1974 wanted to cut its bonds as much as possible with the old regime, especially in these practices of repression, but that was made to the detriment of a more effective work of *political mourning*. Perhaps it is the incompleteness of justice towards the acts of PIDE that allowed for the emergence of such myths in relation to it, mainly the fact that PIDE was not "*that* violent" (in a superficial, hyperbolic comparison with other political polices from, say, Nazi Germany, Soviet Russia, and so on). Retrospectively, then, *Pombinhas* "acts out" that oppressive time and feeling. There is no "happy ending." Quite the contrary, not only justice is *not* done, as the innocent suffer even more.

This may remind one of Saul Friedlander's discussion about the need for historiography never to allow a sense of closure, but rather to leave some room for a *puncturing*, in his wording, to occur in an otherwise smooth, objective and rational narrative. Even though Friedlander is speaking specifically of the Nazi regime and the Holocaust, I do believe it is something that holds some explanatory power over Rocha's books as well. Friedlander writes that "whereas the historical narrative may have to stress the ordinary aspects of everyday life during most of the twelve years of the Nazi epoch, the 'voice-over' of the victims' memories may puncture such normality, at least at the level of commentary" (1992: 53). By focusing on the life of two individuals, the PIDE agent and

the mute woman, Rocha manages to perform a process of revisiting history that brings to the fore the voice of those individuals. "*Working through*," writes Friendlander, "*means confronting the individual voice* in a field dominated by political decisions and administrative decrees which neutralize the concreteness of despair and death" (original emphasis; idem). As of course, when I write "the voice," I am being somewhat metaphorical. After all, the agent of PIDE's "voice" is present through his speech, but also his writing (the letters he writes) and his clippings (of women bodies, see below), while the woman is mute (and no backstory is provided, reducing her almost to a symbolic level, although there is one enigmatic picture produced by Leitão himself in the first pages that may or may not be of the young woman), so we have to make inferences from the layered nature of comics to interpret their character and their desires.

Even if the young woman and the young child in "alto da colina" story (see below) are mute, and even if ultimately their actions fail, the *muteness* speaks of a political strength of comics themselves as an art form. Their muteness, but also their subversive roles, are made visible and that acts upon the narrative interpretative framework. The purpose is not to create a fantasy of empowerment but to create anew the space and time of the historical trauma that afflicted society. Under the influence of Maurice Blanchot, I would say Rocha creates with *Pombinhas* the *site of disaster*: "Write in order not simply to destroy, in order not simply to conserve, in order not to transmit; write in the thrall of the impossible real, that share of disaster wherein every reality, safe and sound, sinks," quoted before (1986: 38).

Under the light of trauma studies, then, is *Pombinhas* "working-through" or "acting-out" history? Dominick LaCapra institutes these two modes of making meaning from trauma by reworking Freud's own distinction between the labour of mourning and melancholia and displacing it from psychoanalysis to history, and I believe this may help us understand the role of Rocha's work within the panorama of Portuguese history. LaCapra is following Freud's notion of trauma, i.e., a breach of the protective shield (the *Reizschutz*) that deflects overt and excessive stimuli. LaCapra distinguishes *acting-out,* which means having "a mimetic relation to the past which is regenerated or relived as if it were fully present rather than represented in memory and inscription," whereas *working-through* "involves introjection through a relation to the past that recognizes its difference from the present" (LaCapra 1998: 45). For LaCapra, which follows the psychoanalytical inflections of Laplanche and Pontalis, working-through does not "solve" the trauma, but it does create

critical distance from the past, enabling the individual to distinguish the present from the past and therefore breaking free from the repetition compulsion of acting-out.

Freud's notions of these twin processes were first presented in the 1917 essay "Mourning and Melancholia," more or less as opposed responses to loss. But he would revise his theories later (as all his ongoing reappraisal of his discipline), and in *The Ego and the Id* (1923) he would redefine the identification process, previously covered by melancholia, as an integral part of the process of mourning (cf. Clewell 2004). If in the first essay, Freud considered that "mourning came to a decisive end," in his later, revised work "he suggests that that the grief work may well be an interminable labour" (Clewell 2004: 61). LaCapra, of course, is interested less in the clinical dimension of psychoanalysis than in its transplantation to the field of history and culture, but he seems to follow the first Freud (LaCapra 2001: 65-66), creating somewhat a hierarchical, judgemental relationship between acting-out and working-through, which have on its basis Freud's distinction between a "pathological" melancholia and a clearer, more determined and socially more normalized and acceptable work of mourning. To be sure, LaCapra does not present an absolute binary, and there are various "modalities" of both acting-out and working-through (2011: 67), but in the interview to *Yad Vashem* included in *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, he is very clear when he declares: "it's via the working-through that one acquires the possibility of being an ethical agent" (144). Still, he allows the fact that they "constitute a distinction, in that one may never be totally separate from the other, and the two may always mark or be implicated in each other" (150). "Mourning, or working-through, allows the ego to let go, to give up the object of desire, through a declaration of its death or dissolution; acting-out is always a necessary step but consequently fated to be superseded. In the case it is not, and "someone is possessed by the past and acting out a repetition compulsion, he or she may be incapable of ethically responsible behavior" (2011: 70).

The absence of precise diegetic temporal and spatial markers in *Pombinhas*, the dilution of a clear-cut protagonism in both a "villain" (Leitão) and a "victim" (the mute young woman), the avoidance of a (formulaic) "happy end" and the choice of *not* having an explanatory, external narrative voice that could frame the events, lead us to read this book as not looking at the past to solve/absolve it, but to compulsorily repeat its crises. But I do not read its "acting-out" as an absence of ethical responsibility. Quite the contrary, and still under the light of LaCapra's lessons, I do believe that that is Rocha's best way to respect history and still call his reader's attention and ethical responsabilisation

towards it. The historian equates "structural trauma" (defined as "an anxiety-producing *condition of possibility* related to the potential for historical traumatization;" my emphasis, 2011: 82) with acting-out and "historical trauma" with working-through. In this relationship of trauma and history, it is worth quoting the author at length here:

> "Historical trauma is specific, and not everyone is subject to it or entitled to the subject-position associated with it. It is dubious to identify with the victim to the point of making oneself a surrogate victim who has the right to the victim's voice or subject-position. The role of empathy and *empathic unsettlement* in the attentive secondary witness does not entail this identity; it involves a kind of virtual experience through which one outs oneself in other's position while recognizing the difference of that position and hence not taking the other's place. (…) It places in jeopardy fetishized and totalizing narratives that deny the trauma that called them into existence by prematurely (re)turning to the pleasure principle, harmonizing events and often recuperating the past in terms of uplifting messages or optimistic, self-serving scenarios. (To some extent the film *Schindler' List* relies on such a fetishistic narrative.)" (my italics, 78)

The notion coined by Dominick LaCapra, *empathic unsettlement* ("a desirable affective dimension of inquiry" in historiography, 2011: 78) "is bound up with a transferential relation to the past, and it is arguably an affective aspect of understanding which both limits objectification and exposes the self to involvement or implication in the past, its actors, and victims" (102). Jill Bennett, in *Empathic Vision*, describes it as "the aesthetic experience of simultaneity *feeling for* another and becoming aware of a distinction between one's own perceptions and the experience of the other" (2005: 8). This is important in relation to *Pombinhas*, especially, considering that in *Salazar* things will work in a different manner, given its diverse diegetic economy. Rocha is not interested in creating a retrospective fantasy where the crimes of the past are avenged,[84] or where the characters would be granted some degree of justice that was not available to the actual people who have experienced *de facto* the oppressive violence of the Estado Novo. By re-creating the lack of justice (which is not necessarily a lack of "narrative closure"), Rocha

[84] Playing into what Peter C. Luebke and Rachel DiNitto call "revanchist fantasy" (2013). This in an article on Suehiro Maruo's short story "Planet of the Jap," originally published in 1985, and translated in English in 1996. In this story, the Japanese use an atomic bomb in Los Angeles, so an annexation of the US ensues. Mark Waid's and J. G. Jones' short series *Strange Fruit*, which can be summed as "Black Superman fights segregation in the U.S. South," plays awkwardly into this category as well. In cinema, two famous examples are Quentin Tarantino's *Inglorious Basterds* (2009) and *Django Unchained* (2012).

forces the narrative of the book to act out that violence, so it happens once again right before our eyes.

Where works of art are concerned, in contrast with historical witnessing processes, and where fictive paths become paramount, what one is looking for are less actual "objects of memory" that the *registration of a process*, "an *attempt to find a language*" (my emphasis, Bennett 2005: 31). This is an affective turn of the creative act, considering how, in the fiction of *Pombinhas*, "[r]ather than inhabiting a character, however, one inhabits - or is inhabited by - an embodied sensation" (idem: 34). In fact, for LaCapra the process of *empathic unsettlement* should "affect the mode of representation in different, nonlegislated ways (…), it is related to the performative dimensions of an account" (2011: 103). This in no way diminishes the effective force of the ethical position of the book. I follow Bennett in the consideration that "visual arts[85] presents trauma as a *political* rather than a subjective phenomenon. It does not offer us a privileged view of the inner subject; rather, by giving trauma extension in space or lived *place*, it invites an awareness of different modes of inhabitation," also quoted before (Bennett 2005: 12).

Pombinhas pays some attention to bodily sensations. It is not only the contrasting bodies of Leitão and the woman, or Leitão's appetite for salty food, which his seemingly phlegmatic wife does not provide and the young woman later is able to offer. More importantly is Leitão's obsessive sexual desires. These start as an abstract, fragmented construction. The story opens up with Leitão going trough his daily routine of sitting at the restaurant, having lunch and coffee and cutting up all the images he finds in newspapers and magazines that depict women's body parts. Leitão is writing a letter, supposedly to a PIDE superior. In it, he reports the life of all his neighbours, especially where the "adoption" of the unknown mute young woman is concerned. But the core of his letter has to do with social morals. Leitão is worried that the daily press is contributing actively to the "destabilization of family harmony" by revealing "images of female anatomy details, introduced in an insidious fashion and wholly decontextualised" (*Pombinhas*: n.p. [4]).[86] But in fact, it is Leitão himself the one who is decontextualising these body parts is Leitão himself, cutting snippets from photographs on sports, beauty pageants, cinema posters and even illustrated advertisements for kitchen utensils, some of which are presumably cut

[85] Bennett never quotes comics as part of this broader area, but I think we can include comics in this category, if not socially at least aesthetically.

[86] Although pages are not numbered, I will provide page numbers in brackets, considering solely the actual *planches*.

from feminine-oriented publications. Judiciously, women in bathing suits, sports equipment of some sort, revealing night gowns and so on, are cut away into details of legs and cleavages. Rocha makes this frenzy of Leitão's gaze visible by showing a two-page spread ([Image 15]) with the clips interspersed with the panels depicting the man's daily life: some of these images act as the background of the panels while others take their place within the usual comics' *mise en page* choices. However, this rather complicates the more or less normalised "protocols" or "trajectories of reading" (Chavanne : 229) of comics. The clips should be seen rather as constant desire projections of Leitão (who even sleeps "amongst" them), and not as a diegetic access to his own scrap book, which, every time it is revealed within a panel, appears empty in fact.

According to Renaud Chavanne's herculean study on comics' specific work of page composition (a term that in his optic should substitute *mise en page*), whatever change in "the principles of composition aims to create some sort of discourse, evoking a particular modality of the workings of the intellect" (my trans.; 2010: 257). In other words, each "reading protocol" implies necessarily a new cognitive disposition of the reader. In the case of these two pages, the reader is invited to share the permanent fantasies of Leitão, although we have a more critical access or a conscious understanding of that desire, whereas Leitão disguises, to himself, that desire as the actual upholding of good Christian, bourgeois family values. In the page to the right, the run-on letter caption reads "A knee here, the suggestion of a cleavage there, an ankle that makes us guess a perfect foot, the free-flowing hair of a young girl: thus are created the phantasms able to disrupt family harmony." It is Leitão himself who creates the phantasms, it is he who "guesses a perfect foot" from an ankle, and it is he who relishes in these verbal descriptions as well as the manual, dare I say thinly-veiled, if diverted, masturbatory compulsion of snipping away these fragments. Leitão himself, in other words, through his cut-and-paste activities, engages with an "operative process for generating meaning" (Heesen 2004: 300).

The German scholar Anke te Heesen distinguishes the results of the clipping practice in the sciences and in the arts, considering the former case as "a notation system" and the latter as "montage and collage" (idem). This may seem to create a clear-cut dichotomy between the science-related emergence of "an order" that makes "sense out of formerly unrelated cuttings," while in contrast, within the purveyance of art, artists creates "juxtapositions that [are] ruled not by the order of the former content but by the visual necessities of the new collage" (idem: 326). The fragmentary nature of clipping seems to be

denied by the science-imbued practice, but Heesen herself points out to unexpected results and "contaminations" (her word), as for instance in Dada collage: "Unintended and unavoidable juxtapositions generated their own meanings and fantasies, as a result of the cutting practices, rather than those intended by the collector" (326-327). Leitão may mask the intent of his clippings with a high morality mask, but what he does is constituting his own desire and sexual projections. By snipping away at "ladies' bits," Leitão creates an overall image of female desirability and object-making.

The very materiality of the clipping activity is made clear within Miguel Rocha's visual and material strategies. Heesen concludes by declaring that

> "Clipping collections were depots of reality that provided the material for their work, enabling them to rework this first layer of reality (as they called it) into a second, more focused version" (325).

Leitão's clippings, as I've mentioned, do not show up within the diegesis itself, within the panels, but rather creates frames around them, surround Leitão and his archives, trickle down the sides of the pages, invade the background where the panels rest, and take over considerable space from the diegetic scenes. It is not by chance that Leitão ends up snoozing within these scenes, as if the separation between sleep and wakefulness, dream and vigil, tumultuous desire and social composure, had been snipped away as well.

These fantasies will play out once again later, after the young woman is working in his home already. In his habitual reports, he starts by declaring his concern about the woman's hygiene, but quickly his thoughts are disturbed by the verbal description of her taking a bath, which quickly gains a visual representation, first in the shape of a advertisement (one of the many he clips), and then as he traverses the city and buys several clothing items for her, her image appears, naked or half-dressed in sensual underwear [Image 16]. Those projections make him paranoid. He runs and becomes increasingly breathless.

There are also verbal puns involved in the title and beyond it, both literal and oblique, that mix these issues of body sensations, embodiment of desire and even animality. "Pombinhas" is "little doves" in Portuguese, in its feminine form, and they refer literally to the pigeons that fly onto Leitão's shoulder at the end of the story as much as to the "girls" that he fantasizes about ("pombinhas" as an euphemism for young girls, with strong sexual connotations). Incidentally, Leitão, although a perfectly ordinary Portuguese

family name, literally means "piglet." Finally, one common word used in Portuguese for informant, the equivalent to the English "rat," would be "bufo," which can either stand for a species of frog or of owl. At the same time, it is related to the verb "bufar," "blow" in Portuguese, standing whether for a strong wind, but also for the air a person can blow through one's mouth and also one's anus (as in "breaking wind"). This concatenation of animal-names underlines the base emotions and behaviours that inform the narrative. In fact, when Leitão discovers that his wife is using the girl as a prostitute in his own home, to punish his wife he has sex with her, but not before forcing her to ride on all fours and ordering her to squeak like a pig.

By creating a narrative in such a confined space - the narrow streets of this city, the restaurant and the home [see Image 17]– and with a small number of characters, *Pombinhas* feels more like a sort of small theatre play (an activity the author does engages with) than a historical epic. However, as we've seen, this concentration on individual characters de-neutralises the administrative, abstract discourse discussed by Friedlander. We cannot, in any way, discuss here all the comics works that, one way or the other, have addressed Portugal's history, but in recent times there has been a few titles that focused more or less in this same "interval" of time, such as Miguel Peres' and Jihon/João Amaral's *Cinzas da Revolta* ("Ashes of Rebellion," Asa 2012), Nuno Duarte's and Joana Afonso's *O Baile* ("The Ball," Kingpin Books 2013) and Filipe Melo's and Juan Cavia's *Vampiros* ("Vampires," Tinta da China 2016). However, these works seem to address those times solely to create a background onto which they project fantasies (the first tells a sort of American-style "rescue mission" adventure set in Angola during the Colonial Wars in the mid-1960s, also the setting of the third book, where a whole platoon is destroyed by dark, mysterious forces, quite possibly paranormal, while the *O Baile* is set just before the visit of Pope Paul VI to the Fátima sanctuary in 1967, and has a PIDE agent visiting a small fishing village to check on and repel a zombie attack). Apart from these fantasies and a number of "pedagogical" books that re-enact the official, bland discourses about these times, there is not much being produced by Portuguese artists[87] about this historical experience, and therefore *Pombinhas* stands out.

[87] Perhaps we should mention that, unsurprisingly?, a few years ago a comic book was published by an Italian author, Giorgio Fratini, that lived for a while in Lisbon, entitled *As paredes têm ouvidos. Sonno Elefante* ("The Walls Have Ears. I'm an elephant," with the second part of the title in Italian; Campo das Letras: Lisboa 2008). This book is basically about the famous building where the direction of PIDE/DGS was located, and a group of people around it, from employees to tortured prisoners.

The book however, created in the 1990s, cannot be read solely as a *representation* of a "historical past," more or less authentic, more or less fictitious. It must be read in a Benjaminian sense, according to the German philosopher's view of the redemptive mission of history. Rocha is not *looking at the past*, but *reconfiguring* it, he is looking at the past through the present, as in Benjamin's famous metaphor from *Passagenwerk* and elsewhere[88]. In other words, *Pombinhas* is as much a look at the past as its evaluation and importance to contemporary readers. In "Thesis on the Philosophy of History," Benjamin declares: "To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it 'the way it really was' (Ranke). It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger. Historical materialism wishes to retain that image of the past which unexpectedly appears to man singled out by history at a moment of danger" (2007: 253). Shoshana Felman construes from these words the idea that "Benjamin advances, thus, a theory of history as trauma — and a correlative theory of the historical conversion of trauma into insight. History consists of chains of traumatic interruptions rather than of sequences of rational causalities. But the traumatized — the subject of history — are deprived of a language in which to speak of their victimization. The relation between history and trauma is speechless" (1999: 213). If the young woman is mute, she is able however to show some agency through the affordances of the comics medium itself – the way she gradually conquers her own fate and bodily movements, after being humiliated, stripped naked and reduced to an inert sexual object, and even though ultimately her agency comes to nought, with her arrest at the close of the narrative. But perhaps it is precisely that ultimate defeat, her own "moment of danger," that illuminates the crimes and injustices perpetrated by the whole of the society and the time depicted obliquely in *Pombinhas.* Even though the conclusions of the stories seem not to provide us with a satisfactory and vindicatory happy ending, leaving that which Ann E. Kaplan calls a "open wound" (2005), and their suffering characters are mute, we have nonetheless *witnessed* the events, so that we can judge the past. Once again, Walter Benjamin's redemptive role of history is present here, as when he writes that "we have been expected upon this earth" to redeem the voices of those that have not been heard until now.

[88] In a letter to Werner Kraft (dated December the 27th , 1935), referring to his *Work of Art* essay, Benjamin writes: "I am busy pointing my telescope through the bloody mist at a mirage of the nineteenth century that I am attempting to reproduce based on the characteristics it will manifest in a future state of the world, liberated from magic" (1994: 516. And in section N of *Das Passagen-Werk* one reads the small note: "telescoping of the past through the present" (2002: 471; [N7a,3]).

In this book, but in *Salazar* as well, Rocha uses images from external sources, such as photographs, postcards, clips from newspapers and magazines, as we've seen (diegetically, they are manipulated by Leitão). In spite of the actancial role that they play individually in each book, and in each scene they're integrated, we can read them in a overarching way by considering them to be props of memory. In fact, many comics artists that deal with autobiography, post-memory or historical trauma integrate in their practice actual or transformed props such as photographs, letters, maps, illustrations, other comics, clips, and whatnot. *Maus*' use of photographs is famous, and has been particularly studied by M. Hirsch, and Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home* (and the subsequent *Are You my Mother?*) integrated objects have been the subject of papers by Ann Cvetkovich (2008), Robyn Warhol (2011) and Polly Mulda (2012). There is a permanent negotiation, especially in *Salazar*, of appropriated and transformed images, or in other words, collaged or reproduced work and drawn material. In the case of the former, Cvetkovich, drawing from Hirsch, speaks of such images as signs of an "unassimilabe memory" (2008: 117). Gabriele Schwab, extending also Hirsch's work on the concept of postmemory and post-generational trauma, speaks how later generations inherit "violent histories not only through the actual memories or stories of parents (postmemory) but also through the traces of affect, particularly affect that remains unintegrated and inassimilable" (Schwab 2010: 14). These affects make up precisely what Cvetkovich will call an "archive of feelings [which] carr[ies] the affective weight of the past" (2008: 120). Many of these objects, especially when not "translated" by the drawing technique or hand of the artists themselves, as in the case of Bechdel, and reveal their original materiality unmixed, open up this space of an *unassimilabe*, *unintegrated* memory, perhaps even the irruption of the past "the way it really was" in the present of the *récit*. In *Pombinhas* they reflect the inner sexual phantasms of Leitão, expressed through the collage work.

In *Salazar*, as we'll see, they'll be used as a complicated negotiation with historical facts, the official discourses and the utopian fantasies of the Estado Novo. The fact that Rocha uses them always in unbalanced, non-symmetrical and non-orthogonal construction within the pages, also points out to their disturbance at the level of the specificities of narrative and representational structures in the comics medium.

The album *Pombinhas* has an additional story. In order to maximize profit, publishers work within standards of paper stock, paper size, page numbers, and so on. Small publishers work within larger constraints, so when confronted with "Pombinhas,"

the story itself, which was only 37 pages long, the editor-publisher asked the author to provide a few extra pages. Miguel Rocha produced two additional pieces.

First, two illustrations that act as separators.

Second, a shorter story entitled "... e no alto da colina, ao lado da igreja, a escola" ("...and on the top of the hill, next to the church, the school"). This story is only 6 pages, and it has no connection with the main story, even though we could imagine that this would have taken place in the same village or city. This story follows a single episode of a young student who rebels against the oppressive, abusive regime of his teacher, who humiliates her students by keeping them in the class room dependent on one of the worst students answering correctly a complex question of history. She also later forces them all to cut their hair off for "hygiene" reasons (with only the bourgeois boy being spared). The school is associated to the local church. In fact, both buildings are adjacent, so that the role of Church and State once again are confounded: the priest acts as a supporter of the teacher's policies. The title itself points out, as one can obviously understand, the promiscuous roles of both church and school, or church and state, mimicking the power that stems from above (both God and the government). Although there are no direct elements that can either support or deny this idea, I believe that this short story can be read under the light of the socio-historical portrait of *Pombinhas* as well as in another story by Miguel Rocha, that I will not address, *Borda d'água.* This last story focus on the sexual initiation of a number of young teenagers, and according to some paratextual information, it could be read autobiographically. It was met with several editions, including the original 1999 black-and-white version in the Bedeteca's Lx Comics book collection and another coloured version, in the same year, issued through the daily *Público*. In 2006 it would be reissued (in black-and-white) by Polvo, with an additional story entitled "Um passeio no campo" ("A stroll in the countryside").

In any case "...e no alto da colina" could be read as a variation of the oppressive network of social relationships of *Pombinhas* from a child's perspective. The union of state and church, the humiliation of the poorer classes under the whims of the dominant middle classes, the subversive but ultimately powerless role of all the "violent acts" of the boy as a response to oppression echo the episodes of the larger story. The young protagonist refuses to have his and his brother's hair cut, he takes the ruler out of the teacher's hands and throws it out the window and, after suffering physical punishment, hides the hair cutter. Even though he learned how to escape from the school, he ends up

not fleeing and staying. Ultimately, this "little revolution," somewhat similar to Jean Vigo's *Zéro de conduite*, fails... just like the liberation of the young mute woman. Although I will not pursue this thought, one other thing we could argue is that by creating a comics narrative of this nature in this past time, Rocha is also creating an alternative discourse on the comics that existed at the time, most of which were characterized by genre adventures or children-oriented pedagogic stories that did not reflect or acted upon the time's actual and very real injustices.[89]

The Books, 2. *Salazar. Agora, na hora da sua morte.*

This book was written with João Paulo Cotrim [Image 18]. We have come across Cotrim before, when we mentioned *LX Comics* (the 1990s magazine) and the Bedeteca de Lisboa. Cotrim, as editor, publisher, scholar, curator, and coordinator of many projects that involve many of the artists that compose the "comics scene" in Portugal, is a predominant figure in it. To put it curtly, Portuguese comics would be very different if not for Cotrim's political clout. It is impossible to assess his role in this dissertation, but I would like to underline that he is also paramount in his creative endeavours. As an active writer for comics, animation and illustrated books he has created some of the most open-ended, poetic work within comics of the last twenty years. Having worked with a multitude of artists, he is able to, at one time, strengthen the expressive characteristics of the image-creators but also maintain his own poetic voice.

We can attempt to list some of his recurrent traits. First of all, there is the elliptical nature of certain events that, despite being central to the plot, are but represented obliquely, or are barely mentioned by a character. The attempt to multiply contradictory interventions with a large number of participating characters. A "soundtrack voice" more or less detached from the diegetic world, as if hovering a little above it in a run-on commentary of what's happening. And, finally, more often than not, a use of language that relishes in metaphors, irony (especially by imitating the flawed moral point of a character) and unreliable narrators. Quite often there is a use of "parallel" relationships between words and images, according to Scott McCloud's typology in *Understanding Comics* (1993: 154 and ff.). All these traits of Cotrim's writing become particularly stressed in more

[89] For a specific history of children's comics of the time, see Ferro 1987; especially pps. 150 and ff.

personal projects or when it is engaged with an artist with room to explore complex mechanisms of comics. *Salazar* was such an opportunity.

Curiously, *Pombinhas* and *Salazar* have been the subject of some of the few academic papers that mention Portuguese comics published in high-profile books on comics studies available in more "central" languages. Lucía Miranda Morla wrote "Lisbonne en deuil, Portugal sans voix ou l'utopie de Salazar," focusing on both books, in the context of a collection of essays that study comics depicting armed conflicts, totalitarian regimes and ideological struggles throughout the world in modern times (2012). And as we have noticed earlier in Chapter One, Mário Gomes and Jan Peuckert have written an article on *Salazar*. Although I do not agree with the broader view they have on Portuguese comics, issues I've addressed already, their close reading of João Paulo Cotrim and Rocha's book is quite remarkable.

It is unfeasible, and I would even say unwarranted, to retell within this dissertation Salazar's biography, and check, point by point as it were, the accuracy or deviations that the authors have explored throughout their book. Although it is based "on historical fact," there is no desire here to create a pedagogical book. In fact, both its fragmented, unordered time organization and sophisticated and complex visual approach would be rather unappealing for its use with younger readers in a school-environment.[90] Hopefully, it is enough to say that *Salazar. Agora, na hora da sua morte* ("Salazar. Now, In the Hour of His Death"), is less a biography than, to use Morla's apt description, an "autopsy" (270) of the regime that would be confounded with his persona. In fact, one could not use this book as a sort of easy-to-read, compact to-go biography, but quite the contrary, one would gain a better access to the poetical transformations that do occur within it under the light of a more intimate knowledge of the dictator's life. And there are many sources one could use, considering that in the past few years there have been many works dedicated to his life, both private and public, both "objective" and "subjective," as well as new editions of his writings, photobiographies, and there are even more or less fictitious depictions of his life and surroundings in popular television series. However, it is not our goal to assess the representations of Salazar's life, which would bring us to a whole different territory and comparative field of transmedia *corpora.*[91] *Salazar* creates a texture

[90] Personally, I think that it would be rather interesting to use such a book, but considering the rather conservative stance of programs both in relation to comics as well as non-established narrative formulas, I believe that its integration would not take place easily. However, it is not impossible that individual teachers may have used it, as they are free to do so within the flexibility of the programs.

around the life of the President of the Council of Ministers in such a way that the goal of the authors is to provide us with a *reflection*, a portrait of the soul of the man.

In the book by G. Schwab referred above, *Hunting Legacies*, the author quotes Eric L. Santner and his notion of "narrative fetishism." This means

> "the construction and deployment of a narrative consciously or unconsciously designed to expunge the traces of the trauma or loss that called that narrative into being in the first place. The use of narrative may be contrasted with that rather different mode of symbolic behavior that Freud called *Trauerarbeit* or the 'work of mourning'. Both narrative fetishism and mourning are responses to loss, to a past that refuses to go away due to its traumatic impact". (apud Schwab 2001: 10)

Cotrim and Rocha have a distinct goal in *slaughtering the dragon*, as it were, once and for all, and perhaps even "expunge the traces of trauma," but not through any kind of denial, whitewashing or downplaying the crimes of history. It is rather by pulling the mask off of Salazar, by showing how despicable and petty he was both on his personal affairs and the way that demeanour expressed or reflected itself upon the philosophy of the Estado Novo. Repeatedly the authors show how his obsession for order focused both on national issues such as economy, the relationship with the Church or the military powers that helped him reach his role, as well as mundane things, such as flowers that need watering or a putting right a small crochet table runner. Bringing to the fore his repeated affirmation that he desired no power for himself but showing him controlling every little decision,[92] "failing" in finding successors or solutions external to the State's machinery, underscore his hypocrisy and disguised forms of power. In fact, Salazar is less a "charismatic leader" - using all the media propaganda powers at his reach - than a "strong dictator" for the reasons he was "a master in the manipulation of a perverted rational-legal legitimacy" and employing a "scale of centralization of decision in extension" (Pinto 2000: 2). Still, he carefully created an image of himself that was propagated by the State

[91] One that would include a study of why Salazar was elected "The greatest Portuguese in History" in a popular television contest in 2007.

[92] The text presenting the "Arquivo Salazar," or originally "The Archives of His Excellency the President of the Coincil [of Ministers]," in the Torre do Tombo National Archives, for instance, explains how these collections of documents – correspondence with Ministers, the Public Administration, the President of the Republic, but also managing all his personal expenses and finances, etc. - are a "decisive instrument for the exercise of António de Oliveira Salazar's political power," showing how such power is "constituted, structured, concentrated and is uninterruptedly prolonged for more than forty years. Through the Archive, Salazar controls everything that directly or indirectly interferes in the political functions he commands." URL: http://digitarq.dgarq.gov.pt/details?id=3886687 (last access: May the 27th 2014).

machinery (and is still used today by "saudosistas," i.e., people who point him out as a positive model of politics, people who "miss him"): a solitary, humble, celibate man, dressing in black and wearing old shoes, with little interest in personal riches and power, quite abnegating personal benefits in the name of his mission in heralding the country to its past glory. "Politics is a necessary evil," he says.

And he is also an old man before his time, as it were, which will be a recurring note in the book. There is one sentence in this book in which one the characters says, "to remember is to grow older faster." João Paulo Cotrim plucked it from somewhere, perhaps he himself coined it, and put it on the character's mouth. Miguel Rocha typed it and drew the drawings that go with it.

But perhaps both the characters and the authors are mistaken. Memory, as soon as it is committed to paper, or any other recording surface that turns it into *text*, is a sort of treason to the very life of memory. "We are made of memories," writes Edward Casey (quoted by Radstone and Hodgkin, 2003: 3). Death is part and parcel of human existence, so we write things down in order to spare them from being annihilated along with ourselves. However, the very act of writing it down, or drawing it, for that matter, fixates it in a formula, a crystallised form, a document or, worse still, a *monument.* And as we've known since Pierre Nora (1984), but also Alois Riegl (1982), monuments make true memory disappear and leave in its place a "lieu de mémoire," that is to say, a fabricated discourse informed by the political and circumstantial contours of the collective memory of the time.

Then again, memory is always already a "material social practice rather than mental faculty," "social to the extent that it functions as the site of transformation of such norms," according to Constantina Papoulias (Radstone-Hodgkin 2003: 116). This same author quotes J. Boyarin in the following: "Memory cannot be strictly individual, inasmuch as it is symbolic and hence intersubjective. Nor can it be literally collective, since it is not superorganic but embodied" (apud 117). *Salazar* brings many of these both individual and collective lines together, creating a complex mesh. Although the "voice" most heard throughout the book is undoubtedly that of Salazar's character (based partially on official, historical discourses and writings), it somewhat fluctuates in and out of an embodied, personalised point of departure. The title page begins after a few pages (in fact, it is the 8th) that act like a sort of prologue. The first spread shows what seems to a large room cluttered with all kinds of chairs: regular dining wooden chairs, some more decorated than others,

some with high backs, some of the Cheltenham variety, armchairs, seetees, one beach deckchair. This, in fact, will become a recurrent image [see montage, Image 19], about which more presently. Several black captions are scattered across the spread, with sentences in the first person, while others on the second. One of these reads: "Resist, António,[93] for God's grace never failed you," and the next, immediately, "To whom does this voice belong?"

But we could also ask, to whom does this last sentence belong? Is it Salazar's own, inquiring the identity about who pronounced the sentence before? Or does it belong to an external narrator? And what about the one in the second person, in fact? It could well be Salazar's too, talking to himself. This doubtful attribution will cross the entire book, but we could also imagine it as a sort of polyphony of voices, all circling around Salazar's life. This ambivalence opens up an issue on narratorial authority, to quote Kai Mikkonen (2008: 315). Through a complex combination of narrative levels, effects of text, layout design and the image itself, one that will be presented several times in small variations, as we'll see below, it contributes to that which Lisa Zunshine called "levels of mind-reading complexity" or "sociocognitive complexity" (2011). By going back and forth in their use of the first and the second person, the authors stay at an indiscernible level, and never move into a historical-making, naturalizing use of the third person. In this, *Salazar* follows a complex "attribution, re-attribution, and re-interpretation of mental states" (Zunshine 2011: 132). Even suspending the difficulties brought about by comics to a neat division of homo- and heterodiegetic narrators, the very textual-verbal track of *Salazar* zigzags between those possibilities.

On the one hand, there are black captions with white seriffed and round typewritten fonts that belong to a sort of disembodied running comment by Salazar about the events and people surrounding his life. More often than not, they are in the first person, but with a quality to them that disconnects them from the diegetic level. There are recurrent sentences, such as the one asking if someone will water the flowers, and sometimes questions addressed to a never-identified second person, yet another disembodied "you." Sometimes the first person is plural, and there are both instances of a majestic "we" - as when Salazar refers to his policies and options – but also instances in which it is Portugal that is embodied by that pronoun, especially when referring to historical, past glories or to its contemporary political relationship with other States. But there are also moments when those captions refer elliptically to Salazar in the third person,

[93] Salazar's full name was António de Oliveira Salazar.

especially when the intent is to underline his putative humility: "This man that was Government, did not wish to be Government. It was given to him, he did not take it... This regime which some call Dictatorship is as serene as our habits, as modest as the Nation's own life, and a friend of labour and the people" (n.p.).

But on the other hand, there are also dialogues within the diegesis, presented in black italicised letters on white background, sometimes "boxed" in contrast to the colours sparsely used in some of the scenes. And the dialogues are presented with dashes. Still, there is not much naturalisation or normalcy in these, as the language used by the characters seeks less an impression of reality than a stage for the maxims and philosophizing of Salazar and his entourage.

Considering that what opens the book is the accident that marked Salazar's decline and what closes is his death, we could read the entirety of the narrative as a sort of hallucination played within Salazar's failing, dying mind. It is as if the trauma of death splits the narrator into a *narrating superego* – the black captions – and a *narrated ego* – everything else that happens at the diegetic level – following Susannah Radstone's controversial take on trauma theory, and the way it developed through Freud's theories on subject-formation. We will return to Radstone's article on the last chapter, especially where her focus on the diffusiveness of authority of contemporary post-industrial, capitalist Western society is concerned, and it is quite telling that in *Salazar* what we have is actually an incredible centralised, if not personalised and embodied authority. But it is this paradoxical disembodiment or progressive dissemination of Salazar's own voice that is the most profound political gesture of Cotrim and Rocha's book, perhaps. Most of the book is focalised via the figure of Salazar, and we could say that the story is told by him from an indiscernible point of his life, perhaps even a transhistorical limbo which he inhabits after his death.[94]

As mentioned, the immediate next six pages – presented before the title page - show the accident he suffered in Estoril, in August 1968. According to the most common accounts (even though there other versions are discussed today), Salazar fell from a deckchair and hit his head against the stone slabs, suffering either an intracranial hematoma or a cerebral thrombosis. He went through surgery little after but never recovered. In September of the same year, he was discreetly substituted by Marcello Caetano but for

[94] Although this would warrant a little more elaboration, I believe there are some points in common with Herman Broch's *The Death of Virgil* in this negotiation between the protagonist's conscience in life and in death.

some years he continued to receive the visits of ministers and other members of the Government, as well as signed dispatches and received reports, as if he continued reigning over the destinies of the country. The prologue, thus, functions as the site of a promised death, so that the whole pseudo-biographical reminiscence that will follow can be seen as the proverbial "life before one's eyes".[95]

Although there was a botched attempt at his life in 1937, purportedly by anarchists (also shown in the book), his rule was thus brought to an end by a somewhat anticlimactic, silly and domestic accident. One of the first short stories by Portuguese José Saramago, Nobel laureate in Literature in 1998, is "The Chair" (found in *Objecto Quase*, lit. "Almost Object," from 1978, but translated into English as *The Lives of Things*), in which the hero is an anobium, a wood-eating beetle. Anonymous and almost invisible, it eats away the wood of the chair of a dictator until this "throne" falls. A humorous take on the end of Salazar, it can nonetheless be also read metaphorically in relation to the whole country, understanding it as "rotten" in the inside and ready to be eaten up by bugs... And although "salazarento" is an irregular and not totally official anthroponym, many people use it informally to depict something that is old, mouldy and politically reactionary or suspicious. It is precisely this strange, almost biological malady that is at the centre of the inquiry of Rocha and Cotrim's "autopsy."

Moreover, the fact that the book is created via snippets of his life and elliptic representation emphasizes the fact that the beginning of the end - the accident - is treated as a mere "anecdote," with "grotesque effect," as Gomes and Peuckert write (2010: 118). According to these authors, whose main thesis is that "temporality is renounced" in *Salazar* (119), it is death that informs the whole structure of the narrative. In fact, there is no page numeration, which may also give the book a certain degree of narrative fluidity. Despite having some linearity involved – after all, the "episodes" of Salazar's life are presented chronologically -, the accident-event itself, represented twice as bookends, and ominously re-presented also across the book in the shape of the many chairs that "interrupt" the narrative flow, becomes a sort of motif, reinforcing the *tressage* work of the book. Gomes and Peuckert speak a "thematic nexus with the central motif of death" (119). These authors discuss the use of images that bleed off the page, and relate it to Scott McCloud's ideas of the same to explore an idea about this suspension of time. I am not arguing that there is

[95] Yet another literary reference that would perhaps lead to interest results in a comparative study would be Gabriel García Marquez' *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, given the centrality of the protagonist's death in informing every single other event depicted in the novel, the complicated narrator's voice in relation to the diegesis, the seemingly lack of frontiers between dream and vigil, present and past, life and death.

not a suspension of temporality being performed in *Salazar*. I do agree that there is, and Gomes and Peuckert's analysis of the text is quite sound and well-argued. The only problem is that I think that this suspension must be thought in coordination with other elements of the text, instead of thinking about it in general terms. In this I am following Brian Richardson's caveat about the "need to look less for dubious schematizations that apply to all texts than for specific structures that individually create alternative realms within the text" (1987: 308).

According to Neil Cohn, "[i]mages are just significations made meaningful through cognitively based concepts, while 'time' is a mental extraction from the causation/change between them" (2010: 134). This suggests that the reader's comprehension of a sequence of images splits into two separate systems, one of navigation through the layout and another of the comprehension of the images themselves (idem: 137). So, for Cohn, there is a convergence between the navigation and the interpretation of all other concepts that helps create the perception of time, instead of believing in an almost automatic equation of panels and moments in time. In many aspects, *Salazar* works less as a dynamic sequence of action-dominated panels/moments than a procession of representations, objects and symbolical constructions. More than "an autopsy," this book acts also like a funereal procession of sorts, and every single factor works towards this impression.

The whole book is treated with bleakness in its colour schemes, what we mentioned before as the "ghoulish, sickly greenish grey." In a way, this is part of Cotrim and Rocha's strategy in denying Salazar, *post mortem*, any sort of justification for his actions and political decisions, or even fantasies, although one could argue that some of the images, such as the Portugal-as-farmland images that appear recurrently, stem from his own mind. Perhaps the authors are even denying him human traits. Here's two significant moments. When the "little boy António" is represented, in the first few pages of the narrative, he is not represented as a child, but as a child with an old man's face [see

montage, Image 20], Salazar' (later) iconic profile.[96] Later on, there is the silent laugh of Christine Garnier.

Garnier, a French journalist who would partake of some intimacy with Salazar, and which would lead her to publish her 1952 book, *Vacances avec Salazar*, was said to have had an affair with him. For our reading, it is quite unimportant if this is fact or gossip. But the authors show her in a restaurant being asked about this possibility, and her reaction is to laugh, quite amused and unabashedly (although there is no speech balloon or onomatopoeia to convey its sound). In a sort of diegetic foreshortening, and in a quite symbolical way, we see Salazar sitting on another table, with a less charming-looking, yet also young and blond woman. The authors, by refusing a sexual connection with Garnier, are but denying, perhaps not that subtly, the possibility of seeing Salazar as human.

One of Fernando Pessoa's most famous verses (from *Mensagem*) is the one that typifies the human being as a "postponed corpse.! But the way that Miguel Rocha represents his characters in *Salazar*, especially the protagonist, with a wax-like blankness to their skins, poorly dynamic poses, sunken shoulders and vacant stares (irises are never drawn, only a dark smudge where the eyes are supposed to be) creates the illusion that we're looking at "corpses *in* life," mere gloomy puppets in-between inertia and dissolution.

As we've seen, *Salazar* was created exclusively via digital tools. Lucía Morla argues in her paper that the use of digital tools implies necessarily a "distance from the subject" ("mettre à distance le sujet"; 2012: 271). I quite disagree with the overarching idea that digital tools create such a distance, for this sort of generalization and essentialization of the creative tools does not help us to read the work. There is nothing essential about digital tools, as related to comics-making, that allows us to say this. If there is a creative distance, or strangeness in *Salazar,* it is due more to the figuration and composition options of the artist, as well as the fragmented nature of the narrative, its unreliable narrator, the transit

[96] One of the most known icon's during the Estado Novo's years is the Guimarães statue of King Afonso Henriques, or Afonso I, the first king of Portugal, created by Augusto Tomás, in which the head is substituted by Salazar's. Although this was non-official postcard that circulated briefly in the 1930s, created by Monarchist sympathisers of Salazar, and immediately forbidden by the regime, the authors present it as being conceived by António Ferro, Minister of Propaganda, and accepted officially. This image was "recuperated" after April 1974, and retrospectively became of the regime's most known images. This sort of projection into historical, crusader figures also occurred with Franco and Hitler. One other known bizarre permutation is the identification of a very similar face to the dictator's in the *Panels of Saint Vincent*, a polyptich from the late 1400s attributed to painter Nuno Gonçalves. The authors will play intertextually with this known "icon" in their many avatars and possibilities of permutation, which is typical in politically radical discourses (for instance, there are a number of images mixing Salazar's face with that of the Pedro Passos Coelho, the Prime Minister between 2011-2015).

between voices and persons, and the constant "interruption" via collages and the double spreads, "symbolic" images.

If some of the first experiences with digital tools in comics-making did create a rather mechanised look that is explored precisely to survey the purported aloofness of post-industrial societies (say, Mike Saenz' 1988 *Iron Man: Crash* or Pepe Moreno's 1990 *Batman: Digital Justice*), subsequent work that includes or is entirely created with digital tools create a rather complex layering of memory and affect (say, Dave McKean's art for the 1995 *Mr. Punch*, with Neil Gaiman) or present no difference whatsoever from the artist's usual output with ink on paper (as is the case of Bastien Vivès et al. recent work for the *Last Man* saga, 2013-present). The same can be said about Rocha's art. After Salazar he has created at least two comics projects with digital tools: *A noiva que o rio disputa ao mar* and *Hans, o cavalo inteligente*, already mentioned. By comparing and contrasting these works, we find that Rocha uses these tools in very different manners, not only to reach different, if not radically contrastive, aesthetic results but also to explore varying degrees of emotionality, proximity with the characters and an overall colour-coded affective ambient.

One of the strategies afforded by digital means – but not exclusively, as collage or distinct drawing styles within the same work as been a staple of comics-making since their inception (Smolderen 2009) – is the possibility of using actual documents within the *récit*, without the need to "transcribe" them or "translate" them through the artist's own style. In the case of *Salazar*, which produces complex non-orthogonal compositions across double spreads [Image 21], this creates a space not only of a referential effect but also as places for a direct dialogue with historiography, collective memory and the work itself. Morla calls this use as "links of an almost sensorial order" (271).

These many "explosions" of collaged documents – newspapers' front pages or clips, photographs, postcards, pamphlets, prayer cards, maps, book's title pages, etc. - seem at once a free-association exercise of the Estado Novo's imaginary and the memories that swirl inside the man's mind. Rocha uses quite often emblematic spreads throughout the book. More often than not, the so-called "splash pages" or "double splash pages" are used within the medium of comics for spectacular or dramatic effects (hence its denomination). Will Eisner and Jack Kirby are known references in their spectacular use in North American comics. However, Rocha uses them less for spectacular effect than actually as time-suspending and symbolical devices. In fact, some of these images are used in order to interrupt the narrative.

There are least three images (two one-panel pages, the other a double spread) with maps of Portugal transformed into a small farm, divided up in small parcels where several rural folk, all Salazar-lookalikes, toil away their little produce [see montage, Image 22]. In many respects, these are but the main fantasies of the *pax ruris* (Medina 1993) desired by the Estado Novo, the perfect idea of a backwards, humble, yet proud Portugal. Associated with the many walks and sentences spoken by Salazar about his pleasure in walking and working on his gardens and farm, and the last two spreads showing a chair abandoned in the garden, the Estado Novo's and Salazar's attachment to an utopia notion of the land is emphasised.

There is also a gloomy yet beautiful diaporama showing the works of Duarte Pacheco (who was Minister of Salazar's governments twice, president of the Lisbon City Hall, and visionary engineer throughout the 1930s and 1940s) put together in a sort of Piranesian construction: the Tejo's bridge (baptised Ponte Salazar and later rechristened as Ponte 25 de Abril), the statues of the Fonte Monumental, more known as Fonte Luminosa in Alameda, Lisbon, the viaduct that bears Pacheco's name and is found in the highway near Monsanto-Alcântara, some of his buildings and, to the right, the Padrão dos Descobrimentos, which, if designed by Cottinelli Telmo (as we've seen in the first chapter, an architect, film-maker and comics artist), it was integrated in the 1940 Exposição do Mundo Português, a project that had the signature of Pacheco and for which the Padrão can be seen as a symbol (as well as the compass rose on the ground in front of it). Placed right after the announcement of his death (in a car accident in 1943), the black sky and surroundings once again gathers these objects as a sort of grim museum and cenotaph to one of the many names that crossed the life and power of Salazar [Image 23]. Acting as a contrast to the rural images, it confirms nonetheless the dichotomies defended by the dictator's discourses.

And, of course, there is the recurrent image of the room cluttered with chairs that we mentioned at the beginning of this section. It appears in a total of 4 double spreads [once again, 19], and only the first has words in it. All the other are "silent." This seems like an eerie musical chairs game, but with no music and no people, with only the troubling idea of commutable absences remaining.

But apart from these "interrupting" spreads, there is another "section" halfway through the book, twenty pages-long, that brings about a more complicated passage of narrative levels.

As one can gather, there are many moments of visual intertextuality in *Salazar*. Not only where the uses of "props" is concerned, of course, but in direct quotes of more or less known images or critical appropriations. By the former, we mean the moments when some of the compositions or panels remind the reader of other images related to Salazar. One of the initial scenes in the book, that shows Salazar's nurses (transformed in four panels into old widows) helping him waving to the crowds from the windows of the palace, are a re-creation of a João Abel Manta's famous three-panel sequence [Image 24]. Manta was a painter, illustrator and caricaturist who worked both during the dictatorship and after it, and created some of the most iconic – and also some of the most virulent - images surrounding the post-25 of April era. He is incredibly influent and, according to one contemporary Portuguese comics artist and researcher, Francisco Sousa Lobo, one in which "the epic and the popular meet in a kind of flat transcendence" (2014: n.p.) In 1978 he published *Caricaturas Portuguesas* ("Portuguese Caricatures"), which can be seen as a sort of Goyesque[97] take on the 48 years of the dictatorship, sparing no aspect of how life was under the deceased regime. This association is quite significant and obvious in the following two pages [Image 25].

But the most important and resonating transmutation is the one operated on the "A lição de Salazar" lithographs. This demands some expansion.

In 1938, a series of seven lithography posters was commissioned to publisher and printer Bertrand by the Ministry of Education in order to signal, and commemorate, the tenth anniversary of Salazar's government. Entitled *A lição de Salazar* ("Salazar's lesson"), these were distributed widely over the country's primary schools as an indoctrinating tool showing the conquests of his regime, in several fronts, contrasting them with the failures of the democratic-liberal governments that succeeded one another between 1910 (the end of monarchy and the implementation of the Republican state) and 1926 (the military coup that ended that cycle of troubled and short-lived governments). One should remember that schools had one sole schoolbook, and that every single policy issued by the Ministry of Education was assuredly followed across the country. One single lesson was being taught all over Portugal. And these lithographs were all but part of such project of homogeneity [see image 26 for one example].

[97] Something that has been repeated time and again, but which was probably pointed out first by writer Mário Dionísio right at the outset, in his review of the book in "Um outro Goya e algo mais" ("Another Goya and beyond," *O Jornal* of December the 29th, 1978). In it, he calls Manta a "post-Picasso Goya" and explains how these images "don't make us laugh. They make us think."

A basic analysis of the semiotic strategies employed in the posters would reveal the clear agenda of showing how superior were Salazar's policies: the Republican situation is shown in a smaller, partially hidden image, in subdued colours, and always with chaotic placed elements, while the Estado Novo's is presented in larger scenes, colourful, organised and clearly read. The lesson is clear-cut: "a comparison between the present of order, progress and development, and a past characterised by disorder (especially financially) and social conflicts" (Samara-Baptista 2010: 14). The accompanying text underlines the efficacy of the policies of the States corporativism ideology: financial organization, an ordering of social progress, the construction of new and better roads and ports, a defence of Christian, national values, and so on.

Cotrim and Rocha use them all throughout a transformative sequence, cropping only the part of the images that reflect the present situation of the Estado Novo, but they use them as a sort of establishing shot for episodes that take place after the depicted scene and that subvert the lesson or the utopian, limited scope that they present [see image 27 for a comparison of the "Finances" lithograph and Cotrim's and Rocha's employment].

The first image to appear in *Salazar* is actually the last in the original series. "Deus, Pátria, Família: a trilogia da educação nacional" ("God, Fatherland, Family: the trilogy of national education" [Image 28]) is the synthesis crown of the poster set's project and goal. Here we have the perfect home: Christian, patriarchal, rural, and quite probably illiterate and poor. The rural utopia was always presented as a better moral and social model than urban life, seen as a cesspool of vice. The image shows no hints that this family owns a radio or even electricity in their home. The wife is fulfilling her patriarchy-appointed domestic tasks, taking care of the dinner and the children, while the man is returning from a day of toiling in the fields, and in spite of that, not surprisingly in this fantasy, clean and proper and sober. The table is set with an immaculate white linen sheet, as well as clean plates, cutlery and glasses. Moreover, the table shows the humblest but most important items of a honest, hard-working family's meal: bread and wine. That these are also the symbols of the Eucharist would not be lost to its public.[98] Through the

[98] One of the most famous songs of the era, and later immortalized by Amália Rodrigues, is "Uma casa portuguesa" (*A Portuguese home*). Written in 1953, with lyrics by Reinaldo Ferreira, its core lesson is quite close to Salazar's view, and that would be disseminated significantly among the lower classes. It is also a perfect example of what C. Murray would call *popaganda*: "With the boundary between propaganda/official discourse and popular culture thoroughly breached it becomes misleading and meaningless to distinguish between them as separate categories. Instead the interaction between these two *apparently* separate discourses should be characterised as *pop*aganda" (original emphases, 2000: 142).

window, we can see an old castle with the Republican flag flying in the wind. In one composite relationship, we can see both the symbol of contemporary Portugal and its glorious history. And conspicuously at the top of the table, in between the openings of the house that leads towards the State and allow the father to return, the Cross.

L. Morla makes a close reading of how Cotrim and Rocha play with this lithography in her paper, performing what she calls a "deconstruction of the Salazar ideal" (2012: 77). And in fact, this single page of *Salazar* not only can act as the heart of the matter of the book, as it creates a veritable *tour de force* on comics' specificities [Image 29]. The obvious contrast between the lithography (originally very colourful) included on top of the page and the "close-ups" below creates a focus on the harsh reality beyond the idealistic image. The "trilogy" of God, fatherland and family – see how the Portuguese flag on top of the castle's tower, seen through the window, the cross and the father's head are are more or less in a same height line –, which creates a united space and body in the lithography is shattered in the comics treatment, with each character isolated from each other. God is absent below and the father, although he is also the point of convergence as in the original image – all other character's sightlines are directed towards him, and he is entering the space – becomes a source of fear. No character's eyes are seen, actually, despite the fact that we are "closer;" their eyes are covered with shadows. The father does not seem to be carrying his hoe, which would be a symbol for a day's hard and honest work at the fields, from which he was back looking for the recompense: a healthy meal at home with the family. The father does not seem to have the happy demeanour of a contented labourer either in the "deconstructed" version. In fact, he seems to bring back the reality and misery barely hidden by alcohol consumption. Morla writes:

> "The patriarchal figure is no longer the representation of the respected and beloved leader, but the symbol of violence and of the aggressive and repressive authority that ill-treats his own children. The utopian print that the dictatorship proposed is quickly deconstructed by the images that contradict the routine, reassuring life extolled by Salazar's propaganda" (idem: 277).

The scene that follows shows the woman begging the man to stop drinking, the man hitting her and then taking the son for a spanking.

Here are some of the verses from its first strophe (my literal translation): "In a Portuguese home it is good to find/bread and wine on the table./When someone knocks on the door, humbly,/they share the table with us./.../The happiness of poverty/is found in this richness/of giving, and be happy for it."

The next few pages work along the same lines. Using the original lithographs as establishing shots, the authors then present a scene in which all the expected well-behaviour of the population is undermined by reality, moved by both political desire or economic need. Instead of a respectful people gathering in the village's centre, and acquiescing to the local powers, workers that disagree with despotic decisions are accused of Communism. Instead of showing the new roads as paths to social mobility, they are simply quicker ways for the PIDE agents to reach their targets. The image that shows the glorious industrial construction of Navy ships and airplanes gives way to prostitute-ridden taverns. In contrast to the piles of riches of the State, we're guided through the shanty towns where people live in squalid conditions and children are forced to beg.

The visual reference brought about by the series of integrated lithographs not only work to provide a referential framework, as if they were "memory props," or as contextualising markers but also trigger, from a cognitive narratological perspective, "prefiguration codes," creating a framework for reader inferences – in this case, "entering" a visual representation of the world as imagined by Salazar's propaganda – and consequently enabling the reader to, through the detours operated by the authors, engage with the "textual effect of subversion" (Kukkonen 2013: 42).

An important narratological consequence of these scenes is, of course, that we're moving away from the purportedly closer level to Salazar's own thoughts and mental states and looking beyond it, reaching the authors' own critical intervention. Although there is never any sentence from a present-day narrator that would contextualise Salazar's biography in the historical distance, the image deconstruction strategies does act upon the utopian images, re-purposing them or extracting from them a subversive reading, which could not be attributed to Salazar himself, of course. He is, in this scene, elevated here to a more-than-human power, personifying, as it did and still does, the Estado Novo. However, in a sense, this moment of attribution of power confirming his statute above the human level can be read both positively – the confirmation of his overwhelming, State-personifying/embodying power – and negatively – once again denying his humanity.

This "educational" sequence is found, in the narrative, after pondering moments. First, we have Salazar sitting in front of the radio, amidst the portraits of Mussolini, Franco and Hitler, and thinking about Portugal's role throughout World War II. He is listening to a concert and after that he hears the announcement of the end of the War. Yet another spread with the empty chairs follows, and then there is a collage jumble

composed of sheet music, handwritten letters, hymns and a Catholic missal, as well as a picture of Mussolini's body hanging at the Piazzale Loreto. In the bottom right corner, Salazar stands beneath one of his *mottos*: "Study with doubt, realise with faith." If the images abstracted from the lithographs may be seen as an extension of Salazar's voice and desire proclaiming a sort of rural utopia impervious to what happens in the rest of the world, everything else – the deconstruction itself - is in a different, autonomous level. After this, we return once again to the "mundane" life of the dictator, namely the episode with Christine Garnier (in 1951).

The described sequence is therefore a powerful instance of authorial intervention in *Salazar.* After all, if Salazar, the character, is the focaliser of the narrative – we do not need to have a confusion of a first-person ocular perspective (rarely used in comics) with that of the narrator – these images do not correspond to Salazar's own mental states (dreams, projections, desires). The lithographs are used as an existent visual translation of the Estado Novo's philosophy, and the visual deconstruction it the inquiry, the critical transformation operated by the authors, in a moment when they are unlinked, as it were, from Salazar. What takes place here is precisely a failure of a "sustained continuing-consciousness frame" (Mikkonen: 316), which reinforces the specificity of narratological categories of comics in detriment to their literary use.

As mentioned, Gomes and Peuckert insist and study in detail the suspension of time that is the major theme of *Salazar*. Not only where the figuration of the dictator himself is concerned, but in other visual tropes, many of the represented events, sentences spoken by characters and even the way that the *mise en page* is thought of, whether through double spreads, the bleeding of many panels, the collage or appropriation of heterogeneous visual material and the fragmentary nature of the pages even when they seem to be composed following more regular grids (most of them actually "semi-regular," in Renaud Chavanne's parlance). The researchers make an analysis of the fatalistic tones of the book to reach the conclusion that comics are a privileged means to represent the staticity of Salazar's regime and the melancholic mentality of the Portuguese, in a sense that almost essentialises comics as "constituted by dead images," given that the "dynamic suggested in comics is necessarily built on static corpses" (2010: 126). In the case of *Salazar*, and in contrast to *Pombinhas*, Rocha chooses to represent most of the visual planes from a more or less frontal, proximate perspective. Of course, his highly stylised approach does not allow us to describe it using notions that stem from more naturalistic or

classical styles of comics, but it is not wholly absurd to say that there are less bird's-eye and worm's-eye shots in *Salazar*, as well as less dynamic poses of the bodies. Even explosions or acts of violence – as with Duarte Pacheco's accident, the bombs in Lisbon or Salazar's assassination attempt - are represented in an almost symbolic way, with a jumble of straight, very fine lines meshed together in a white mass that jumps off the images.

Can we provide any general reading of *Salazar*? How does it relate to comics production in Portugal and what place does it have in relation to the texture of history? In terms of the "comics scene" in Portugal, we can say, without exaggeration, that there are not many books that can be compared to it, given the fact that most of the comics projects that involve depictions of the historical past engage with naturalising strategies, both at the level of narrative and image representation. In other words, " largely a public, often official, and narrowly political memory" (Confino 1997: 1394). Their purpose is, more often than not, pedagogic. Not that there's something wrong with pedagogy, of course, but by this term I wish to commingle it with the simplifying and often non-confrontational, official discourses of Portuguese identity. After all, still today the "brandos costumes" ("serene customs") is a myth repeatedly propagated, almost erasing the violence that characterised the Civil War (rarely called as such but rather through the euphemisms of "The Liberal Wars" or "The Miguelist War") of 1828-34, the conflicts of the First Republic and, of course, the Colonial Wars, fought "away from the eyes, away from the heart," to quote literally a Portuguese proverb.[99] Historian Oliveira Marques and comics artist Filipe Abranches also made another book that, despite superficially catering to the pedagogical needs of having a "comic book" about the history of a city or an important personage, avoid to usual trappings of a compendium or a simplified account of the facts. *A História de Lisboa* (2 vols., Assírio & Alvim: 1998-2000) is also made from impressions and intensities, a composition of apparently dispersed fragments but that follows a red thread: a thread however whose goal is not to sew back in shape but paradoxically to rend the many mythological veils that cover Portuguese identity and self-knowledge.

Bringing back history not in the crystal form of a "lesson," but a lived reality, even if so tinted by the shapes and shadows of death as in *Salazar*, in this sense, Cotrim, aided by Rocha, is a twin soul of Spanish comics writer Filipe Hernandéz Cava, whose oeuvre would herald an interesting transnational comparison on how comics address history on the margins of official discourses and school programmes. Other artists could be

[99] Which of course corresponds to the English "out of sight, out of mind."

brought to mind, from Alberto Breccia to David Vandermeuleun, from Kyle Baker to Jacques Tardi.

The authors are addressing an idea of *heritage* that is seldom thought of critically, but accepted as fact, an eternal and even commodified truth. Cotrim and Rocha are not looking for a commodification of Salazar's biography in any way. By centring their attention on the man, and not in the social-economic conditions of his claim to power, or by investigating the causes and consequences of the regime, or perhaps even exposing the complicated relationships of other people with the dictator's figure (from the world of industry, the military, politics, etc.), the authors are underlining its subjectivity. They are at once accepting the power that Salazar holds as an icon, but re-using and re-interpreting it in a different manner. Cultural historian D. C. Harvey affirms "how concepts of heritage have always developed and changed according to the contemporary societal context of transforming power relationships and emerging nascent national (and other) identities" (2001: 327-335). In a time where representative democracy and free speech is possible in Portugal, but a more diversified, critical discussion of the historical past, especially the close one, and issues of identity is lacking, *Salazar* uses almost exclusively the "objective" facts and affirmations of Salazar himself and the Estado Novo in an edifice that demonstrates its obvious limitations through a strategy of proximity to the individual and, as in the lithographs' sequence, in their mundane consequences. In a way, the authors are paying attention to the following *caveat* of Alon Confino: "by sanctifying the political while underplaying the social, and by sacrificing the cultural to the political, we transform memory into a 'natural' corollary of political development and interests" (Confino 1997: 1394; for the issue of the individuality of memory, see also Crane 1997).

One cannot forget how Salazar himself contributed significantly to this so-called "fate-ridden" mentality, to a discourse that still holds sway today. One of his sentences quoted in the book reads "The ancient peoples are sad or cynical. We Portuguese were fated to be sad. A sentence set in stone, and with it I refuse the cynicism with which some wish to portrait me." Many thinkers have contributed to this identity, as well as popular culture,[100] and through it an idea of subjection to fate is enmeshed with the developments of history. Portuguese philosopher Eduardo Lourenço, in the essay entitled "Europa ou o Diálogo que nos Falta" ("Europe, or, The dialogue that we're Missing," in 1987), speaks of Portugal's (last) four centuries as an "existência crepuscular" ("twilight

[100] Especially through music, above all the complicated Estado Novo's appropriation of the cities-bound Fado song as a political, cultural and indoctrinating tool for the construction of a national identity.

existence"; 1987: 7). Once it is repeated in so many instances, it becomes the truth. We must be aware however, that historiography does not exist in a pure state distinct and separate from heritage, which would imply "that, firstly, there is something called 'correct' historical narrative that heritage is busily destroying and, extending from this, that until very recently, all history, historical narrative and other relationships with the past are somehow more genuine and authentic than they have now become" (Harvey 2001: 325). There is no "pure" memory, as Confino discusses, that is not always already a criss-cross of several negotiations. Memory can be seen or described as "the ways in which people construct a sense of the past," "the memory of people who actually experienced a given event," and "the representation of the past and the making of it into a shared cultural knowledge" (1997: 1386). Singular and collective memories, experienced and historical memories, vernacular and official memories, instead of being seen as dichotomies, actually commingle (idem: 1401-1402), and must be historicised. *Salazar*, however, seems to work in a different direction. By showing consistently and repeatedly dates and "memory props" that point out to an effective historiography, Salazar not so much de-*historicises* as it de-*temporalises* its narrative structure, as Gomes and Peuckert also argued.

One of the tenets of trauma theory is that the "overcoming or mastery of trauma must involve processes of 'integration' and 'assimilation'" (Elsaesser, 2001: 196). This seems to be a point in which Cathy Caruth and Ruth Leys would agree, especially when the latter discusses that in "[p]sychotherapy ... the goal of recounting the trauma story is integration, not exorcism" (Leys 1996: 123). Moreover, Leys discusses the collective and political importance of personal testimony of the past, and how in its narrative act, "the trauma becomes a testimony" (idem). In that sense, Rocha creates two more or less fictional books that are anchored on historical reality, and that a*ct out* the traumas of the recent past in the history of Portugal. But by that very act – the repetition of fears and injustices, and the exposition of the pettiness of Salazar – he creates it into a manageable object, a textual object. Elsaesser, discussing Caruth's theory, explains how from those "processes (or 'techniques') of integration" one of the most important "would be narrative and the ability to tell a (one's) story, where the narrator is fully present to him- or herself in the act of telling" (2001: 196). In fact, Salazar is not wholly present to himself in his act of telling; quite the contrary, he is in a process of self-dissolution.

Although this is obvious, we must underline that neither of these books is a biography proper, but a work of fiction (*Pombinhas*) and a highly stylised biography

(*Salazar*). Thomas Elsaesser, referring to the presence of trauma and its representation in the (contemporary) media of cinema and television, explains how "[t]his double role [that is, of "the power of immediacy inherent in the moving image" and "cinema's capacity to 'fake' such authenticity through the stylistic-narrational techniques of editing sounds and images"] has 'traumatized' both documentary and feature filmmaking" (2001: 197). Although with very different tools, such as the narrative ellipses, the visual metaphors, the "exploded" *mise en page*, the fluctuating narrative voices, and the subversion of the "memory props," the comics' work of *Salazar* and *Pombinhas* reach also a specific "traumatization" of comics. They are not a "talking cure" of a subject, but a space of negotiation where a collective trauma can be "acted-out" as a necessary step for its "working-through."

Allow me to quote Elsaesser once again at some length:

> "If ['obsessive repetition [is] in fact the media's (and popular culture's) most 'authentic temporality and time-regime'], then repetition becomes part of creating in the spectator not just 'prosthetic memory' but prosthetic trauma, deliberately or inadvertently setting up a gap between the (visual, somatic) impact of an event or image and the (the media's) ability to make sense of it, in order to make it enter into the order of the comprehensible and translating it into discourse" (2001: 197)

To a certain extent, it may seem that the mediation afforded by television, cinema and, by extension, comics, can lead to a dangerous situation, a situation that would bypass LaCapra's "empathic unsettlement" and lead one to naturalising, simplifying and overarching fantasies of rewritten history. However, on an individual, psychoanalytical basis, this always already takes place:

> "Yet *Nachträglichkeit* is itself an aspect of a wider epistemological issue, the subject's need to invoke - or invent - an origin or absent cause in order to explain how one knows what one knows, in relation to an event or a course of action, but also in relation to the subject's self-awareness of his or her identity. It is in this sense that Lacan speaks of the *après-coup* as the act of the subject filling a void or a gap in his/her identity, by providing a causal-chronological sequence or a chain of signifiers, to assure him/herself of a spatio-temporal consistency and a place in the symbolic order.
>
> (…)

> "But to the degree that the culture is generating and circulating new forms of media memory, the subject 'invents' or invokes temporal and spatial markers (for example, the shifters 'now' and 'me') for her/his own memory, body-based and somatic, which is to say, she/he fantasizes history in the form of trauma" (Elsaesser 2001: 198)

Elsaesser argues that trauma allows for a referentiality that is at once able to "place history discursively" but no longer with a specific spatio-temporal location: it "suspends the categories of true and false, being in some sense performative" (idem: 199), one that must go beyond the aporias of "objective history" but also the relativism of deconstruction. *Interpretation* is the key word, but also the ethical implications of that interpretation, considering how history, following LaCapra, contributes to "a cognitively and ethically responsible public sphere" (2011: 91).

In a not wholly different context, Ernst Van Alphen discusses how some visual arts works by second-generation of Holocaust survivors create "playacting" that opens the way to "felt knowledge." He points out how these works emphasize:

> "the most powerful and socially constructive function that art as thought can fulfill in a world that cannot thrive without the 'thick' thought offered by imaginative, imaging experiments. From the critical function of exposing, through the intervention and reorientation of rewriting, this function of working through history clutches the case for art as thought. But though itself, thanks to art's experimenting with its limits, is now no longer 'just' intellectual. It is now, in the strongest possible sense of the word, aesthetic - binding the senses through an indelible bond forged between the subject and the world it tries so hard to inhabit" (2005: xx-xxi).

Rocha's narratives do not open up familiar paths. They do not allow for familiarity with the addressed traumas. Instead of contributing towards "self-conscious, deliberate attempts to preserve memory in historical ways," as Susan Cranes defines Pierre Nora's *lieux de mémoire* (1997: 1379), Rocha tries to and manages to re-ignite the functioning of memory, even if a fleeting, dying one. *Pombinhas* and *Salazar* do not solve or absolve history, they make sure it is not forgotten. But by *acting-out* the traumas that took place, and by *not* offering a formulaic framework that would allow for an ethical irresponsible identification with the victims (or with the major perpetrator in the figure of Salazar), he does provide a remarkable stepping stone to *work them through*.

Chapter Five.

Minor comics and their response to Small Traumas.

This last analytical chapter will not deal with an individual artist or a single work but rather with various shorter texts penned by different artists. The reason is twofold.

The first of these points represents a sort of social shift in the perspective of the dissertation so far: it is my belief that by considering solely formats such as albums, books or graphic novels we are being constricted precisely by certain commodification choices and commercial categories *against* which the works central to this chapter act. Ever since the change of comics from mostly press-related formats to book-related forms, and the subsequent "literary turn," throughout the 1970s and 1980s, especially in Europe and the United States, comics gained not only a new impetus, but a new life, with a new understanding of its own history and even cultural validation (Lesage: 2011 and 2015). But this hides quite a significant number of comics works. The privilege that most comics studies give to conventional book formats (whether collections of comic book serials, stand-alone graphic novels, Franco-Belgian albums, and so on) creates an illusion that comics have always been conveyed in book-related forms, or that it is in those formats that we find the comics that most warrant academic attention. As we know, the medium's history and present diversity is far more complicated than that and criticism should aim more widely.[101] Paying attention to certain examples of what may be called as "wild publication" (drawing from Jacques Dubois's lessons), objects at the margin of the literary institutions' production and distribution models, widens the scope of what comics are, both socially and aesthetically.

101

This does not mean that there is no work being done precisely on other vehicles, from magazine and newspaper comics to webcomics and beyond, of course. People like Ian Gordon, John Lent, José Alaniz, Mel Gibson, Mark McKinney and Bart Beaty, to name but a few, are scholars who have widened the scope of attention. Philippe Capart's *La Crypte Tonique* no. 12 (2015), for instance, is wholly dedicated to the French-speaking "petits formats," which can seen as "cheaper" forms of comics in every sense of that word.

Consequently, in some instances, I will only refer to one single title by a single artist, while in others I may refer to a larger work. Amassing such different productions in one chapter, however, as will hopefully become clear, mirrors the "collective" nature of these comics, in the way they contribute to a certain image of the pervasiveness of traumatogenic social situations in contemporary Portugal, as seen by comics. Hillary Chute pointed out the "cross-discursive form of comics" as being singularly "apt for expressing [the] difficult register [of trauma]" (2010: 2), which as I've pointed in the introduction, I do not wish to overplay to the point of considering it superior to any other art form that may be used. My point in the shift of attention in this chapter is to show that such approach can be achieved not only through the most habitual, dramatic techniques but also through low-pitched, experimental work, which may defy "that habituation of trauma into numbing and domesticating cultural conventions," as Roger Luckhurst put its (2008: 89). This will open up a "narrative *possibility*" (idem, original emphasis), going against the grain of some of the central tenets of Trauma Studies, especially that which declares the very impossibility of narrating the event. As Jenny Edkins makes as clear as possible:

> "Traumas, by definition, are events that are incapable of, or at the very least resist, narration or integration into linear narratives or, in other words, into homogeneous linear time. Trauma is not experienced in linear time; there are no words, no language, through which such an experience could take place. A traumatic event cannot be integrated into our symbolic universe, the very universe that has been called into question by the trauma. It cannot be narrated" (Edkins 2014: 132)

But can one narrate through any other means? Indeed, and this is the second point of the different nature of this chapter, many of the following works do not follow the usual narrative or structural protocols of conventional comics. One way or another, they try out experimental approaches. This way we are entering that which Portuguese comics critic Domingos Isabelinho has called the "expanded field" of comics, as quoted before. We will argue that these comics forms are *minor* forms, in the strict Deleuzian-Guattarian sense of that word, which can provide yet another important inflection in understanding ways to express small traumas.

As we have seen before, Dominick LaCapra distinguishes *ontological* and *structural* trauma, which relates to individuals and is addressed by psychoanalysis, from *historical* trauma, which he says "is specific, and not everyone is subject to it or entitled to the subject-position associated with it. It is dubious to identify with the victim to the point

of making oneself a surrogate victim who has the right to the victim's voice or subject-position" (2001: 78). Karyn Ball, discussing this distinction, brings the point home when she writes that historical trauma "is triggered by an actual loss rather than an unconscious absence" (2007: xxxii-xxxiii). What this allows, and taking in consideration the issue of art, is that an empathetic *distance* is accorded to the reading. Still following Ball, what happens is that "the spectator is prevented from assuming a pious identification with victims that cultural theorist Susannah Radstone associated with Manichean constructions of testimony. Rather the viewer is implicated by the camera as a voyeur in the perpetration of the crime and in the lag between its perception and the action that might bring the perpetrators to justice" (2007: xxxix). This is precisely what we have seen taking place in *Pombinhas* by Miguel Rocha. But according to LaCapra, *empathic unsettlement* should "affect the mode of representation in different, nonlegislated ways… it is related to the performative dimensions of an account" (2001: 103). And some of the "nonlegislated ways" afforded by comics are the ones we are about to engage with in this chapter.

In the interview to the Yad Vashem included at the end of *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, LaCapra discusses these distinctions, and raises an important question:

> "How do you affirm a democratic politics if you don't have some notion of working-through that is not identical to full transcendence, and yet is distinguishable from, and acts as a countervailing force to, endless repetition of the past or being implicated in the trauma, or continually validating the trauma?" (2001: 153)

The answer may be in minor comics addressing small traumas.

Minority report.

The concept of *minority* in its literary-philosophical sense was coined by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in their short book, *Kafka. Pour une littérature mineure* (1975). The chapter entitled "What is Minor Literature?" (2003: 38 and ff.) is as clear as possible in pointing out what the authors see as its three main characteristics. Firstly, in it, "language is affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization." Second, "everything in them is political." Lastly, "everything takes on a collective value." We will go through each trait in the following paragraphs, splicing them with other sources, under the auspices of our subject matter. Naturally, Deleuze and Guattari pursue these notions vis-a-vis Kafka's writing, following the particular specificities of a Jewish Czech writer writing in a

bureaucratic-styled German, so we must try to understand how one would proceed to understand it in relation to such a different territory as comics.

As far as I can tell, Jan Baetens has been the first person to attempt an approach to the comics medium through the lenses of this particular concept. He has done so, consequentially, in two articles, both from 2008. The first is "North and South in Belgian Comics," which presents a summary characterization of specifically Belgian comics and then points out, quite briefly, to the French philosophers' concept as a promising analytical tool in what the comics scholar deems "cultural semiotics" (2008a). The second moment is "Of Graphic Novels and Minor Cultures: The Fréon Collective," which displaces the discussion from a national/linguistic context to a wider one, namely, the place of comics as a specific artform within larger cultural units. Those cultural contexts are, in a first instance, the "graphic novel field" in both the United States and Europe – although mainly France and Belgium, drawing largely from material expounded before in French in Baetens' groundbreaking *Formes et Politiques de la Bande Dessinée* (1998) - and, and in a second level, the so-called "intermedial turn" (2008a).

Each of the components of *minorité* – its deterritorialised nature, and its political and collective force – is imbricated and influences the next. Although I will discuss these components or, as Simon O'Sullivan calls them in an article on photography, "modalities," separately, one must bear in mind that there are always theoretical consequences of the one in all other characteristics.

The first trait is that of deterritorialisation. This has to do with an intensive, affective quality of the language employed, which in the case of comics includes the specific structures of comics-making (from panels to the multiframe, from braiding to significant format choices). One can choose to look at it from a topographical or even national point of view. After all, the present dissertation is indeed discussing a group of comics works that are brought together first and foremost because they seem to belong to the same cultural, social and political unity. One of Jan Baetens' arguments about the characterization of the specifically Francophone Belgian comics he addresses in one of the aforementioned articles is precisely the fact that they are indeed devoid of local characteristics, aiming preferably for a slightly more diluted visage, which could be co-opted, first and foremost, by French audiences. Baetens refers to such equilibrium as "something between absence and irony" (2008a: 118). Despite the fact that Miguel Carneiro, Marco Mendes, Carlos Pinheiro, Nuno Sousa, or other Porto authors, and Joana

Figueiredo, Daniel Seabra Lopes, José Feitor, or other Lisbon authors, all of which I will study presently, do not utilize local speech as a shortcut to local culture, they do use real spaces and references in order to create a social cartography where their stories become anchored, rooted, localized somewhat.

Deterritorialisation however, should be understood as a profound metamorphosis, an ongoing process of becoming, that may end up reterritorialised or not. It is, according to O'Sullivan, the emergence of "noise – or glitches as we might call them – that free language from itself, at least, from its signifying self... an experimentation with, and from within, language. A rupturing of representation. A breaking of the habit of 'making sense', of 'being human' (2012: 6). The narrative and figurative choices of authors such as Marco Mendes and Miguel Rocha, for instance, inscribe them in quite clear representation strategies. No matter how fragmented they may be, their stories cast distinct plots in the stories and definitive characters, with psychological attributes, the organization of events, a more or less clearly evolutive timeline and so on. But Joana Figueiredo, José Feitor, Daniel Seabra Lopes and Miguel Carneiro, on the contrary, explore other kinds of organization of their scenes and even characters that bring rupture to the fore.

At a given point O'Sullivan refers to forms of figuration as "narration and illustration, which is to say representation" (2012: 13). For O'Sullivan, figuration is one of the "wrong positions" of the *figural*, being the other one the "*absolute* deterritorialisation of the figure (the move to total abstraction)" (idem). What this means is that even in the case of pure or geometric abstraction, the shapes will find a *code*, that is to say, they will *pass through the brain*, instead of being something affecting directly the nervous system (2012: 16). A reader of this sort of abstract work will always integrate it into preexisting categories of some sort. That is to say that such work will become re-territorialised. Take Lewis Trondheim's *Bleu* (L'Association 2003), for example. This small booklet comprises nothing but colourful blots and abstract shapes against a blue background, there is no text, no panel organization, or other typical comics structures. However, quite quickly we can interpret the "movements" of each shape or the "interrelations" between the various shapes as "consuming," "digesting," "turning" "fusing," "splitting," projecting animal behaviours and even will onto these shapes, which partially defeats the initial abstraction.

In this sense, we can see the experiences of some abstract comics or, even more blatantly so, the Oubapo project's many comics, as falling into that second "wrong" position. They too pass through the brain. As soon as one "reads," "interprets" or "gets"

the method, familiarity ensues, a category is found. This is something quite different from the minor, stuttering and stammering comics I want to address.

It is also important to underline time and again that most of the texts I will deal with in this chapter have been published either as fanzines, small press publications or have been presented as art objects. In any case, they can be categorized as pre-existing formulas or formats. All in all, they can be seen as "independent comics," even if there's always the danger of using such word as a catch-all term for incredibly varied productions. For the time being I want to consider it as being part of micro-editions in which an absolutely free self-expression is possible, something with the "angry idealism" with which Stephen Duncombe characterized post-punk fanzines from the 1970s (1997: 3), which would be extremely influential for years to come, not only, but particularly in the comics medium. Ann Poletti also reinforces the idea that the seemingly simple materiality of these objects bolsters the many forms of self-constructedness, through "their unique status as homemade texts to practice a particularly complex set of representational strategies" (2008: 86). Contrarily to standardized books, where choices (paper stock, binding, covers, fonts, etc.) are usually limited in terms of materiality or following cost-effectiveness criteria, making most of the "choices" practically invisible or at least transparent, in this sort of edition "the text-object has a distinctive physical presence which is constitutive of the modes of signification the form makes possible" (Idem: 88). We will address oversized magazines, photocopies booklets, comics made out of post-it notes, and so on, and all those material traces become part of the self-reflexivity of those texts.

A *mineur* literature – or cinema, or comics – is that which operates an act of *deterritorialisation*, using the usual elements of the (major) art form in such a different manner that forces us to look at that form in a completely new way. It has nothing to do with numbers, with a "marginality" from a commercial or reception point of view. What takes place is rather an active distancing from whatever traits characterize the dominant discourse. That is the reason why Deleuze and Guattari say, as clearly as possible, that one of its main characteristics (the second of three) is that everything in it is "political," in the sense that whatever gesture, small trait, connection it manages to do, in its small scale, connects immediately to other issues that bring about a judgement value (2003: 39 ff.). We will return to this aspect shortly, with a small inflection through Rancière, in order to expand what one can do with "politics."

What deterritorialisation entails, within the aesthetic-experimental plane, is that it works and undermines a major structure from within. We may come across a comic that seems to be following the usual characteristics of the medium – say, the existence of characters, a spatial-temporal organized axis, causality, and so on – but that present those very same elements in a radically different structure. This special usage, the very operation of deterritorialisation, instead of turning the text into a "failed one," rather brings into crisis the very need for those conventional structures in the first place.

The final aspect of minority, in accordance to Deleuze and Guattari, is its *collective nature*. This refers to the position of the speakers working within a major, dominant culture. Instead of pretending to be universal in their discourse, they are self-conscious of the specificity of the group within which they speak and to whom they speak. Small presses, fanzines and independent publications have quite a distinguished community dimension to them (Duncombe 1997). More often than not, there are the social events that are intrinsically related to them, from fairs to exhibitions, meetings and even specific practices of trading or sales. This is no different in Portugal for these authors and the small publishers they belong to or work with. The networks of diffusion are rather different from more commercial productions, namely bookstores, but that does not mean that there are no examples of crossovers. Marco Mendes, for instance, despite having had most of his first work published in quite simple A4 photocopied fanzines with low runs, managed to collect much of his strips into wide-circulating books.

If, following Jacques Dubois, we imagine a normative institution of comics, these objects would be at the margins of it. They would be what the Belgian theorist has called "wild publishing" (2005). Based on a marginal economy, with rare exceptions of state support or funds, their end is not profit. Affiliated in a complex mesh of sub- and counter-cultures, these are contra-institutional comics, that mirror other creative circles, with "specific material conditions and relations of production, and embodied in the prismatic network created by independent and nonprofit presses, small-press distribution centres, reading series, poet talks, and list serve discussions" (Ngai, 2005: 303).

As Deleuze and Guarrati write in *Kafka,* "[minor literature's] cramped space forces each individual intrigue to connect immediately to politics" (2003: 39). It's as if the confined space and span of the minor text, precisely for its difference among its panorama, brings about a political consequence by expressing itself. This trait involves directly its "collective" side, as even when referring to a seemingly individual topicality its actions and

consequences have to do with the struggles of a group. Presently, Portugal has a varied, even if small, market of comics, as I've presented in its contextualization. Most, if not all, the works of this chapter work against the grain of works that wish to reach a wide, popular audience. Although we cannot say that this market creates a large system, as it does in countries such as France, Belgium, the UK, the United States or even Spain, these are works that do create what one could call, with Gertrude Stein, "little resistances" (apud Ngai: 294). Moreover, and underlining its collective aspect, they do so always within specific networks of collaboration. Most of the authors publish their own work, but also publish others, and sometimes are published by others. One finds the work of a given artist across several publications from different publishing collectives. The commutations are endless. Finally, they use formats that demand a more limited, perhaps more obscure, circulation but which demands or allows for proximity between producers and readers (for instance, one buys the publication from the artist him- or herself at a fair, or orders it online, etc.). As of course, this will have quite important repercussions within the political dimension.

Indeed, the final trait of minority we have to address is that of politics. "The political domain has contaminated every statement," write Deleuze and Guattari (2003: 40). I will take a longer time discussing this trait, as I wish to inflect it through Jacques Rancière's understanding of the word, although I've breached it already before, in the Marco Mendes' chapter.

Nonconsensual Politics.

Many of the works that will be addressed within this chapter have been the subject of a previous treatment, as they were part of the selection that was presented as an exhibition entitled *SemConsenso. Banda Desenhada, Ilustração e Política* (in English, "SansConsensus. Comics, Illustration and Politics"), which was held at the Museu do Neo-Realismo in Vila Franca de Xira, Portugal, between October the 31st, 2015 and March the 20th, 2016. This show was curated by me and it attempted a strong dialogue with the literary, cinematographic, musical and visual art production associated with the wide-ranging and long-living Neo Realism movement in Portugal, from the late 1920s up until the 1980s. The exhibition became an opportunity, in fact, to see how pertinent was the possibility of thinking about many of these small press and self-published fanzines and

printed objects in the context of the current economic crisis and political tension in Portugal in the last few years.

These works have been created in a social context that has revealed itself to be increasingly more extreme, in which one of the poles, more often than not the representatives of right-wing governments and capitalist forces, presents itself as the "correct one," in relation to which everything else is "on the outside," and therefore, undervalued if not completely ignored. To such a point that even when a dialogue seems possible, it is conducted according to strict rules established by those in power. So that those "outside," if they wish to dialogue, must abide by the rules established by those "inside."

One of the typical defence mechanisms of an hegemony is to present its solutions and paths as "objective," "realistic," "necessary," "unavoidable" and so on. And anything else that is different, that is to say, any sort of *dissent*, will be seen as "blinded by ideological principles." In contrast with the hegemony, of course, which affirms itself to be ideology-free. This is repeated *ad nauseam* as if we were not living in post-Althusserian times, and had not learned well the lesson of how a whole complex of systems of representation expresses through material forms that, in turn, shape individuals into social subjects. One does well in remembering Karl Mannheim famous *dictum* from *Ideology and Utopia*, "A society is possible in the last analysis because the individuals in it carry around in their heads some sort of picture of that society" (1997: xxv). Mannheim's idea, and even his wording, may remind one of Benedict Anderson's "imagined community," which prompts us to ask: what if we imagined something different?

Contrary to the more or less concentrated practice of Marco Mendes and Miguel Rocha, even with the latter's different stylistic approaches, the heterogeneity of the artists of the present chapter should be quite clear. It would be somewhat difficult to find overarching common traits where visual styles, work methods, process materials, communication strategies and text distribution techniques are concerned in order to consider them as a coherent "school" or even a trend. We can neither group them together according to genres, types of humor, or even the social roles of their work. Even though they may publish in the same publications, participate in the same events, share any given set of circumstances or even formally share an organization structure (an association, for instance), the "collective" side of their minor production emerges from the work itself, not from a conscious concert of their efforts. There are a few cases where a convergence is

possible, but we cannot just subsume them to a comprehensive vision. What they do share is a concern towards a new *distribution of the sensible*, to use a turn of phrase by Rancière.[102]

For the French philosopher, there is a clear distinction between politics as performed by the class of people that are involved in parties, who are elected, hold office and exercise power institutionally, and politics as manifested in everyday life and decisions. For the first he uses the term *la politique politicienne*, or "politician's politics," and even sardonically, *la police.* This has to do with the acquisition, maintenance and exercise of power. The second he sees as *la politique* proper, which is related to the conquest of the right of expression, more often than not precisely by those who do not possess it. It is an emancipatory drive that brings into question the sense of collective (established) values.

In L*a Mésentente*, Rancière explains how politics proper takes place when those who are usually unheard and unseen, or whose voice is considered purely as "noise," are able to occupy a space that was up until then out of their reach, precisely forbidden by the rules and power of the *police* (1995: 43 and ff.).

An actual example that will play an important role in some of the work that follows may help bring this closer to home. In Porto city, more precisely in the Alto da Fontinha, a socially depressed part of the city, inhabited by poorer working classes, there was a primary school that had been deactivated since 2006, although it continued to be property of the City Council. A group of citizens and activists decided to occupy it in April 2011, in order to "return it to the community," serving not only the children of that area, but also young people and older people. This group of "occupiers" cleaned up the place, refurbished it, brought into it new materials and shared equipments, and created a series of courses for the local community, offering from drawing and reading workshops to music, bike repair, yoga and capoeira classes, but also introductory and practical courses on documentary cinema, for instance.

This group came to be known as Es.Col.A (which is the acronym for "Auto-Managed Collective Space" but also a pun using the Portuguese word for "school"). Needless to say, and despite the fact that some of the articles of the Portuguese Constitution defend "popular actions" for the preservation and usage of municipal property, these were, strictly speaking, illegal actions. And despite the attempt of Es.Col.A to become organized

[102] I am indebted to Professor Ann Miller for this connection, and discussion on this topic. See Miller 2012 and 2013.

institutionally as an association, which would open a (remote) possibility of dialogue with the City Council and even apply for financial funding, things went awry fast enough. In May 2011 they were evicted for the first time (and 7 members of the movement arrested). There was an attempt to solve this situation legally, but bureaucracy just became an insurmountable hurdle. In April the 19th 2012 they were evicted once again, but this time around with a peculiarly strong presence of the police at the premises. Furthermore, a strange relationship with certain media (Porto newspapers and television chains) allowed for the whole operation to be highly publicized throughout, with the main discourse painting the scene as if talking about criminals and drug-addicts who had ransacked the place, a venue now "rescued" by the forces of authority.

The story is, of course, extremely complex. Suffice to say two last things. In April the 25th 2012 (the day Portugal commemorates the 1974 Democratic Revolution) people re-occupied the school in a festive ambiance (hundreds of people, among locals and activists, were present) but Es.Col.A was not able to resume their activities. And despite the apparent intervention of municipal employees a the site, there was no transformation whatsoever. The Alto da Fontinha primary school remains, at the time of writing this, after one year of "occupation," abandoned.

The reason I am taking a little while in describing this situation is because one publication of comics-related material, *Buraco* (lit. "Hole"), which counts with many of the artists important for this chapter, took a dramatic shift in order to create a 4th issue completely dedicated to Es.Col.A [Image 30]. Moreover, many of the artists were involved in the demonstrations in support of the project, as they had common acquaintances or shared the same principles or, as they work in other non-profit cultural associations of platforms of the city. *Buraco* started at the end of 2011 as a large newspaper-like format publication with comics and illustration. Each subsequent issue grew in number of pages, from 16 (issue 1) to 24 (issue 3), with mostly black-and-white printed pages, but with a two-colour cover and central spread. The magazine had a fixed roster of artists, all living and working in Porto, including Marco Mendes, whom I've discussed in the first chapter, and Miguel Carneiro, Bruno Borges, Carlos Pinheiro and Nuno Sousa, who will be discussed throughout this chapter. Each issue had guest artists, including Joana "Jucifer" Figueiredo and José Feitor, whom we will also focus on. The works in the first three issues already discussed certain social realities, more or less tied to particular circumstances either of the city of Porto or of the country in general.

Marco Mendes continues to explore his short melancholy humor strips, while other artists work somewhat more elliptically. Nuno Sousa, for instances, presents a one-page story [Image 31]. What seems to be a homeless man is sleeping in a park bench. He wakes up and asks a passing young man what time it is. The young man give him the time, 8h05, and the homeless man seems quite worried, and leaves the bench hurriedly, as if late for an appointment. The title, translatable as "living above one's means," plays upon an often-repeated sentence stated by many politicians, including the then President of the Republic, Cavaco Silva, in order to justify the draconian measures the last Governments, as well as the "Troika," have brought into effect in order to curtail the financial crisis and sovereign debt in Portugal. The awkward humour, of course, is to show how these measures have affected even more a very large working class, or below that, which has never had the chance to understand what it means to be "above one's means." Right after this short piece by Sousa, Jucifer presents a two-page story, with only six panels, in which two characters have a more or less elliptic talk about jobs, remuneration and cuts, a typical discussion of an ever-increasing class of young people with precarious employment situations.

The very sentences found on the covers or the self-description of the project points out to an ironical take. "We hit rock bottom. So we dug a deeper hole," reads the cover of issue 1. "The sky's the limit," proclaims issue 2, with a drawing of the feet of a probably hanged man. "A door is closed. A window is opened," states the cover of issue 3 over the contrasting images of a walled-up door that has been breached again, the back cover presenting the endless horizon over a sea in an inclined image.

Issue 4 changed drastically, exploding both its format, its participants and the nature of the pieces. With more than 100 pages, printed in cheaper newspaper stock, it presented itself as a "satirical and pro-lyrical newspaper"[103] and sported two covers. On the one side, there is a representation of Bordalo Pinheiro's Zé Povinho character, the one who stands for a certain Portuguese type discussed at the introduction, and superimposed on it, a Jolly Roger (the skull-and-bones pirates' flag). On the other, a portrait of the President of the City Hall, Rui Rio, but with his face totally covered by a black circle. These covers were based on silkscreen posters that were issued by Oficina Arara (to which Miguel Carneiro belongs) and distributed all over the city of Porto during the April the 25th demonstrations

[103] The word they use is "pasquim," which stands for 19th century forms of cheaply-produced, usually anonymous and satirical pamphlets, ultimately related to the *pasquinades*, with their origin in the Roman "Pasquino" statue.

in defence of Es.Col.A (with many variations, which allow to identify Rui Rio), in more public *détournement* actions.

This is an issue that states to be part of the "União Fontinha." Collecting newspaper clips, documents from the Es.Col.A movement and the City Hall, statements from participants, photos from the project and the demonstrations, articles, ironic texts, short comics, illustrations and caricatures, essays, collages and games, *Buraco* 4 acts as a sort of deterritorialised archive and response to the whole situation explained above. It is both an opportunity for the people who participated in the Es.Col.A movement to explain and share their experience and the chance to respond to the prepotence of the "politique politicienne." There are texts about "communities under construction" and short reportage pieces about other "Occupy" movements, such as the one in Tower David in Caracas. José Smith Vargas, a young artist who has been creating many short journalism comic pieces for a small print run anarchist newspaper called *Mapa*, participates with a 10 page (three of which actually show two half-sized pages) piece covering the police-conducted eviction of April the 11th, the demonstration of the 25th, as well as declarations swiped from other media by both sympathizers and (politician) critics of the movement. By re-appropriating sentences from the politicians, such as Paulo Rios's[104] concern that "[Es.Col.A's] behaviour is altruistic but is wrong. I hope no one follows its example...," and by visually expounding the bureaucratic nightmare the association had to go through and then the police violence of the eviction, Vargas shows the ridiculousness of the disproportion of power but also the individuality of each participant, including the local inhabitants who welcomed the project to their lives.

Most of the comics and illustration artists use either humor, a defying stance against the political power or celebrate the events throughout the issue, such as Teresa Câmara Pestana, André Lemos, Bruno Borges, Carlos Pinheiro, among others (none of the pages are signed, and there is no index either, but one can recognize the styles). All in all, therefore, this collective effort upholds the principles addressed by the movement. By showing this solidarity through the publication of a themed-newspaper, *Buraco* is directly engaged in a local movement at the same time that brings about a new dimension to the movement itself, which, despite a blog, inactive since 2014 (escoladafontinha.blogspot.pt), makes quite an effort *not* to address the media.

[104] President of the local PSD party, the one in power at the time at both City level and the national Government.

But there are slightly different tones in work, however, that reveal the proverbial crack in the wall. Nuno Sousa shows a fragmented story where passersby do not stop to help what seems to be a dead man in the street and a group of students involved in a humiliating and very public "praxe" (hazing). Marco Mendes, perhaps unsurprisingly, turns this celebration on its head to reveal perhaps the actual inefficiency of these popular movements when moving against established powers. His participation in *Buraco* 4 presents a four-panel strip [Image 32], in which three panels show throngs of people marching the streets of Porto supporting Es.Col.A (one can read in the banners "No one stops the people's actions!," "Let's occupy a dream" or "The school is for everyone"). But the last one shows a close up of the school gates bolted shut with a heavy lock. The view embraces the empty patio, filled with debris and wilted flowers (probably the carnations used April the 25th, the "flower of the Revolution"), while a single shadow of a policeman stands guard of the emptied out space. *Buraco* would continue as a title, but it would become a totally different graphic project, exploring a certain political criticism dimension but eschewing comics altogether making it fall outside the purview of this chapter.[105]

Following Jill Bennett, in *Empathic Vision*, we can look at *Buraco*, as an overall project, as engaging with a "sense of the political as a mode of thought embedded in a particular set of practices" (2005: 150). If we can read the particular works as political text, as direct dialogues with, responses to or interventions in the actual events that took place in the city of Porto, it is more interesting and revealing how, as a more or less organized project, it contributes decisively to that which Arjun Appadurai has called "landscapes of group identity" (apud Bennet, idem) and, before him, Anderson called "imagined communities." Here the sense of community-construction is quite strong and active and conscious, even if it is a community – at least for my purposes – solely existent between the covers of the publication. Nevertheless, issue 4 seems to underscore Jill Bennett's argument:

> "Giving testimony is thus the occasion for a face-to-face encounter in the sense evoked by Gayatri Spivak (and elaborated on by her commentator Sara Ahmed) when she argues that what is important in the politics of resistance or liberation is not simply the act of speaking but the *possibility of being heard*. (…) a politics of listening, predicated on the listener's willingness to enter into such *an encounter with another*" (2005: 105, my emphasis)

[105] Such as a mix-and-match book with alternating pictures of public personalities and animals, creating variations of faces, names and descriptions.

Buraco 4 then is, at one time, a homage to the Es.Col.A project and an alternative information media outlet. They re-publish mainstream news with notes "correcting" them, and providing many documents, from official communication with the City Council to manifestos and photographs. There are a number of comics reportage on the "despejo" (eviction), poems, interviews with the people that live in the occupied school's *bairro*, opinion articles and essays with historical, political and philosophical assessments of people's resistance, the right to manifestation and the absurdity of the law. In relation to this last point, perhaps the following example will suffice. After the violent action of "despejo," three men were arrested and convicted to do community service. A rather strange conviction for people who were dedicating themselves to community service in the first place...

One other artist took upon a similar cultural-political project. While not directly related to the Es.Col.A movement, there was yet another "occupy"-like movement in the city of Porto. The Portuguese-Chilean artist Amanda Baeza based herself on it to create, in early 2013, a small booklet. *Our Library* (published by the Latvian publisher kuš! [Image 33]) depicts in a short number of pages and not many words the story of a library constructed by the people and then destroyed by a seemingly militaristic power, but creating the hope of a future utopian return. Whereas the booklet indicates that *Our Library* is "[b]ased on a true story," there is no further information about the events. However, for those who might catch the reference, this seems to mirror what happened to "the Biblioteca Popular do Marquês." The "Popular Library" was a small construction erected in 1946 at the Jardim do Marquês, at the heart of the city of Porto. As a "popular library," its goal was to provide the local inhabitants, comprised of the poorer, working classes, with some of the tools that could lead to intellectual, cultural and even moral and civic improvement. This remained opened and served the local population, especially children – the library organized public readings, poetry writing contests, and the like – up until 2001. Closed by the City council, the equipment remained simply abandoned during a whole decade. In June the 16th, 2012, a group of people took it upon themselves to reopen that space and not only filled it with books and brought back activities, free of charge, as they actually did some improvement work on the structure. Sadly, three days later City Council officials and policemen boarded up the space once again and threw all found materials in the garbage, proceeding to, in their outlook of things, the impediment of criminal activities, above all the occupation of private property.

It is not our place to criticize this action or go into further details, but *Our Library* seems to follow Amanda Baeza's need to address such an unjust event by creating a short, fictional story about such an interrupted project. The book seems to point out, however, that despite the destruction of the library and death of its hero, it was not a "failed" project. As its pages declare: "Sometimes our heroes are killed//that doesn't mean they have failed/they simply put into motion//...the change we want to see in the world/and that work isn't finished yet." The last scene of the book shows a new structure erected at the place of the former library, illuminated at night, and inviting new readers in. This is all drawn after a very geometric, stylized fashion, with very bright, contrasting colours, eschewing realism proper in favour of strongly symbolic compositions and figuration, highly dynamic (reminiscent of New Wave authors such as Mark Beyer, whose unique high-stylized approach was employed in stories about urban decadence, dark and paranoid fantasies).

Other artists responded also in *Buraco* 4 to social happenings as well, even if in an oblique manner. Bruno Borges, for instance, published a one-page story, with 6 regular panels [Image 34]. The only thing we see is a list of meat for sale ("one kilo of pork chops," "4 hamburgers," and so on). It is an almost impenetrable, non-narrative experimental comic. But is is in fact a commentary about a commercial promotion gone awry. A supermarket chain, Pingo Doce, engaging with so-called "dumping practices," lowered the prices of all products below 50% on May the 1st, 2014, leading to a massive torrent of people visiting their establishments, especially in urban centres, which lead consequently to conflicts, petty violence and awkward episodes of people buying things in a frenzy. This was profusely shown on the news, commented and discussed. What should be a day of celebration of the worker, ended up to be a day of discussions about consumer culture, the not so-legal pricing and labour practices of the company (they would be fined by such practices) and the despair of many people to have access to certain goods that are usually beyond their means. Borges' short comic, with no commentary whatsoever, becomes in itself a reification of the piled supplies of meat. Borges' minimalist, slipshod-like drawings seem to show a human body lying, a wall, a cross, mixing perhaps the idea of animal meat ready for consumption and the decay of human flesh, or the death that awaits. On the other hand, more simply, there might be an identification of body parts according to the announced meat – the last panel is the easiest to identify, as we look upon a man's legs and read "2 legs of free-range chicken."

Other artists created longer pieces that actually addressed the state of the nation, whether culturally, economically or politically. Pepedelrey (Pedro Pereira) created a 6 page story entitled "Recuar!" ("Backing up" [Image 35]) in 2014. This was supposed to come out in an anthology of Portuguese comics associated with an exhibition at the Italian Treviso festival, *Quadradinhos*, but for undisclosed reasons the piece was not accepted. The author provided the publisher with another story, but proceeded to publish the refused piece on his blog, along with articles from the Portuguese Constitution and declaring that his story had been censored.[106] The story presents a winding comment by an outsider narrator and shows different scenes that in one way or another mirror some of the alienated quality of contemporary Portuguese society. A seemingly 19th century-styled woman stands before an ATM machine declaring our modernity. A bullfighting scene shows how "we confuse barbarity with tradition" (bullfights, including the public killing of the bull, are legal in some parts of the country). Another scene shows a man sitting in front of a TV set hooked to a drip-bag, but with a football instead of the bag. In what seems to be a blood-dripping background, a map of Portugal crossed by the dollar sign is presented sideways, with men hanging from it. This last scene reads: "Dead is this Portugal, run and managed by well-organized criminals."

Critical reception in Portugal of these works is very limited, if it happens at all. Some of the criticisms that has been pointed out (although in informal circles, which will come across here as "hearsay") is that these works may be considered politically poorly articulated, and even ineffective. This seems to mirror some criticism towards similar literary trends (see Giglioli 2001). The reasons for such criticism lies mostly in the fact that these works do not actually expose the contexts they emerge from in a sustained manner (using concrete names, data, etc. in a journalistic or essayistic fashion), nor do they engage with whatever dimensions they find faults with in the purportedly represented situations, and even less so provide a clear answer or alternative to the problems. Furthermore, the very form of criticism that these works articulate seems to be rather vague or clichéd. Social inequalities and crises seem to be addressed, but not in strongly clear terms, and there is no articulation of founded solutions of redress.

But it is precisely by trying to deal with overwhelmingly powerful odds – a prepotent City Council, a coercive company, a widespread economic, political and social instability in the country – that the authors create these oblique, original comments that makes visible an

[106] http://lifeofpepe.blogspot.pt/2014/08/recuar-bd-censuradaproibida.html Acessed 2016, May the 23rd.

alternative to the "police" discourse. Within a psychoanalytical context, Susannah Radstone engages with the problem of addressing, as it were, these responses:

> "...in a society where authority is diffuse, incomprehensible, or even incoherent, aggressivity *toward* that authority is less easily managed, since that authority is harder to identify and thus less available for incorporative fantasy" (original emphasis; 2001: 116)

Who can one blame for the state of society? Whereas one can imagine that the responsibility is shared by the members of successive governments, public bodies, worker's unions, political parties, private companies, supra-national institutions, it is very difficult to blame *one* particular problem – people's alienation, bureaucratic decisions, a lack of general interest for civic movements – to one particular agent. The proper authority is always elusive, diffuse, ungraspable, if there is one. By denying the sanctioned, normative discourse about how one should address these crises, these authors are are proposing a discourse of *dissent*.

Quite often, the word "consensus" is employed by the political classes in its habitual, common sense, as synonym to the "right way" of expressing one's opinions or engaging with one's practices within democracy. No matter how diffused the responsibility of the consequences. However, just as with other words turned mantra in the liberal context of today, such as "the inevitability" of "austerity," the sacrosanct "entrepreneurship" and the "governmental axis" (that is to say, an idea that only the parties that have had enough clout to become part of the governments – namely the Portuguese Socialist party, PS, and the Portuguese Social-Democrat party, PSD – are able to hold truly balanced conversations about solutions for the governability of the State), this means but a contracted perspective of what may be a part of the democratic equation. Consensus, therefore, is not a sign of open and active participation, but rather a reducing of who can participate, and a narrowing down of the space of possible actions. It is a narrow "distribution of the sensible," which Rancière explains as

> "the system of self-evident facts of sense perception that simultaneously discloses the existence of something in common and the delimitations that define the respective parts and positions within it." (2004: 12)

This is what permits us to look at *dissensus* as "the demonstration of a gap in the sensible itself. Political demonstration makes visible that which had no reason to be seen" (2010: 28). Dissensus is then emancipatory, i.e., its creates more room for democracy, more

agents involved in democratic discourses, it elicits more democracy. The relationship that one can make between comics, as an art, and politics is not about the relationship, or a crossing, between a fictional territory and reality, but two manners of producing fiction. One is the dominant form of consensus, that pretends to be non-fictive: it is the "inevitable way" of doing things, the "realistic way," the only way, the objective way, and so on. The other "the dismantling of the old distribution of what could be seen, thought and done [*du visible, du pensable et du faisable*] (2009: 47).

Political art, thus, does not have to be necessarily structured according to pedagogical or propagandist principles. There is no reason to believe that there is a divorce between experimentation and a political expression, given the fact that "...formal innovation has been quite often thought as being on the side of political change but also, and above all, because political change has always been misserved by poor aesthetic choices" (Baetens 1998: 108, my translation). Creating new distributions of the sensible can be done without recourse to the immediate social reality and sometimes even integrate strangely genre-bound stories, with seemingly fantasy tropes and apparent escapism, with no morality whatsoever, as is the case of Daniel Seabra Lopes' work.

True Trauma, Unbound Fiction.

> "When the critical imperative is driven by a demand for testimony in a legalistic sense, the trauma memoir is instantly put on trial and must verify its conformity to a strict pact: verisimilitude; identity of author, narrator and character. Yet, as has been consistently observed, trauma is not necessarily a stable or straightforwardly evidential or narratable event, but might be mobile, subject to all kinds of transformation and revision. This might be well the defining element of a traumatic memory, and *what makes it particularly amenable to fictional narrative instead*" (Luckhurst, 2008: 137, my emphasis)

In 2012, the independent publishing house Chili Com Carne issued a volume entitled *Futuro Primitivo* ("Primitive Future"). For this, the editor Marcos Farrajota invited 45 Portuguese and international artists to provide him with material which he could edit at will, under the wide-reaching theme of "post-apocalyptic." The artists responded in the most diverse ways, of course, some of them following more or less expected clichés from adventure and science fiction genres, others simply showing scenes of quotidian life, as if stating that we are already living in the end of days.

Despite the fact that the artists sent in either straightforward, unitary stories, loose visual material or *cadavre exquis* collaborations, *Futuro Primitivo* is not a mere anthology. The result is a 160 page so-called "remix comix" where the sent material was interpolated amongst itself in the most diverse manners. The reader can either try to look for the material from one single author or, physically more easily, read it in one go, trying to come up with the necessary associations of meaning between one piece and the other, sometimes mingled panel by panel, or page by page, or with short sections from the same hand followed by another, etc. Within the material that was sent, the on-and-off comics author Daniel Seabra Lopes provided Farrajota with an untitled 15 panel series [Image 36]. These were published in the book amidst many other submissions but I will refer to it, however, as a self-standing piece, as I had the opportunity to manipulate it myself in order to present it within the *SemConsenso* exhibition.

The opening panel shows the smoking craters of several volcanoes. The following 6 panels show scenes (two of the panels are sub-divided) from a futuristic, yet familiar cityscape, filled with smoke and dead people lying on the floor in the streets, train platforms, a parliament, households and offices. From the 8th panel onwards, we will follow what seems to be a trio of characters who escape the killing, billowing smoke using skis, then a powerboat and finally by individual hot air balloons. One can imagine these to be the scenes of a Stephen King meets Jules Verne-like novel of an unexplainable catastrophe, either man-made or ecological, but there seems to be no connection whatsoever to one's true reality.

However, I believe that unlike artists such as Amanda Baeza, Bruno Borges or Pepedelrey, who created critical commentaries after different fashions on real events of contemporary Portuguese society, Daniel Seabra Lopes, along with Joana Figueiredo, José Feitor and others, incorporates violent fantasies and acts them out. Unable or unwilling to deal with such diffuse forms of authority and to provide a more articulated discussion about the social-economic crisis in Portugal, these authors create these small fictions in order to mirror certain violent, *ugly feelings* (Ngai 2005) in relation to what one may call the impending doom within Portugal (rampaging inflation, growing and disparaging unemployment rates, the debasing of the value of education, the lack of critical attention towards the arts, especially the "low forms" of comics and illustration, and so on). They bring about what S. Radstone explains as "complex identifications in play in post memorial testimonial scenarios" (2001: 122), where there is always the possibility not only of

identification with the victims but also identification with the perpetrators. Famously, Art Spiegelman's employed the Nazi metaphorical representations of Jewish people as mice in *Maus*. And as we've seen, Miguel Rocha brings about reenactments of violence, silence and propaganda as well in *Pombinhas* and *Salazar*. Instead of choosing, as it were, the role of the "good guys" (hero or sufferer), these artists explore the expression of the "bad guys:" the violence and meanness, or the apathy, the indifference, towards the suffering of others.

Miguel Carneiro embraces this "low form" in order to mirror this problematic diffuse authority. Carneiro is also a painter, from Porto, but has been working as a comics and a silkscreen artist for more than ten years. We already referred to his early comics production, when we discussed the early fanzines with Marco Mendes, under the duo A Mula. While still at the university of Porto, Carneiro put out a number of fanzines with Mendes, always with shifting titles. Throughout these publications, Miguel Carneiro presented short stories with shifting styles, but always with the same main character and supporting cast. Using the name of the protagonist, we will refer to this body of work as "Monsieur Pignon" [Image 37].

Each Pignon's story is presented as a self-standing unit, more often than not as one page gags. Nonetheless, we can look at it as both individual pages and as an ongoing text, either within a single publication (where sometimes there are general common visual characteristics shared by the pages) or in its entirety. Carneiro emphasises one way or the other a sentence at the top of each page, whether it's part of someone's speech or not, that can work as a title for that specific page (in exhibitions, for instance, it is quite usual to identify each individual page by that "title"). Carneiro uses English and French sentences amidst the Portuguese, sometimes quotes from songs (such as Bob Dylan' verse, "There must be some kinda way out of here" from *All along the watchtower*) to literal, therefore bad, translations from Portuguese expressions into other languages (e.g., "aussitôt dit, aussitôt fait").

Monsieur Pignon[107] is a moustached, hatted character who traverses several urban and not-so-urban landscapes sharing reminiscences, commenting upon life in general or establishing absurd dialogues with other characters. Pignon, to be sure, is not Carneiro. This is not an autobiographical character, nor is it of auto-fictive stories. However, there are moments when a somewhat autobiographical streak can be understood in some of the

[107] The name derives from Jacques Brel's character in the Édouard Molinaro's film *L'Emmerdeur* (1973), but has no other connection to it (personal communication with the author).

instalments of the character. One must realize that the A Mula's fanzines published autobiographical material by Marco Mendes, as well as realist paintings and drawings by people such as Arlindo Silva, André Sousa, João Marrucho, João Marçal and a non-artist collaborator, Didi Vassi. The recurrence of these people faces in the work of one another created the idea of a sort of family or small universe of friends within the publication, somewhat like it occurred with the publications of Toronto artists Seth, Chester Brown and Joe Matt in the early 1990s, for example.

In one of the aforementioned magazines (*Estou careca...*), Didi Vassi represents Miguel Carneiro under two different guises: the "usual" Carneiro and the "Pignon" Carneiro. Vassi is not a comics-artist. But, as a friend and (then) room-mate of Carneiro and Mendes, not only does he appear once in a while as a character in *Diário Rasgado*, for instance (as does Carneiro, incidentally), as he also participates in the fanzines with amateur-looking drawings. Lacking cohesion skills in his drawing, Carneiro appears with curly or straight hair, black-inked or with a simple outline, etc. Still, one can identify him from the black rimmed glasses, for instance.

Apart from that, Pignon is also physically similar to a sort of caricature of poet Fernando Pessoa, who has already become a cultural icon overshadowing the historical character. Both the stylistic and behavioural transformations that the character goes through by the multiplicity of approaches by Carneiro makes up the notion that Pignon himself, like Pessoa, is able to tap into what Portuguese philosopher Eduardo Lourenço called a "multidimensional universe of contemporary interiority" (my translation; 1987: 9). But Pignon's interiority, presented verbally in his monologues and thought balloons, are often met with brutal interruptions. It is very telling that for one particular scene Didi Vassi chooses to depict a philosophizing Carneiro drawn in his usual daily self, and another Carneiro, similar to Pignon, simply declaring wanting to go to bed early.

In fact, many of the stories starring Pignon are "philosophizing" to a certain extent. Either Pignon himself or other characters speak about life in general, death, the future, economic uncertainty, relationships, and so on. However, these themes are either disguised or curtailed with frankly bad puns or cut short with some sort of vulgar expletive. In the beginning, the jokes are rather pornographic and sexist, or were plainly imbecile. To a certain extent, Carneiro was exploring tropes and styles similar to cheap cartoon magazines that were sold in the late 1970s, not to mention toilet humour. Carneiro was exploring that which José Gil calls *grosseria*, Portuguese for *vulgarity*:

> "Today, with the expansion of kitsch as a universal taste genre to planetary scale, it was inevitable that *grosseria* [*vulgarity*, *coarseness*, *loutishness*] would become accentuated in our archaic country, so close to postmodernism.
>
> "What is vulgarity*?* It is the result of effort and the impossibility to give shape to a formless visceral background... To some piece of refined wit, someone answers back with an obscenity: but far from producing a Rabelaisian effect (in which the background is brought up, in its own shape, to sublime forms, or to a parody of the sublime), vulgarity destroys the refinement and cultivation of the irony, smashing it into a viscous and repugnant ooze". (my translation; 2004: 106)

To Gil this means a weakening of the mind, of the spirit. It connects consciousness directly to the body and its visceral spasms. This also helps us understand why there are so many permutations between bodies in Pignon. Miguel Carneiro is dexterous in his drawings skills, exploring multiple styles, changing not only materials but also aesthetic approaches. Some of the stories are blatantly drawn with cheap ballpoint pens and markers on restaurant paper towels, other are less crude and use China ink and detailed cross-hatching. Pignon's body is also very elastic, sometimes presenting hands as big as his whole body, other times respecting some anatomical and proportion rules. Other characters, like a chicken-headed character or the Coconino County-like mutating landscape point out to this permanent metamorphosis. The obsession with certain violent, even though cartoonish, actions, bodily fluids and sexual exploits are so exaggerated that they become ridiculous.

To a certain extent, this sort of regression to a non-conformed body or to societal behaviour can be seen as deterritorialisation of sorts, breaking that which was expected to gain a normative form into ceaseless, uncontrollable bits and parts, each with its own independent behaviour. This is an exercise of minorisation. Not only expressed in the conduct of the character but the multitude of material forms of Pignon's stories. If we consider culture to provide "a space of (serious) play, a transitional mode where knowledge and meaning can be constantly disarticulated and reassembled," as Isobel Armstrong argues (apud Luckhurst 2008: 79), then Carneiro embodies this playfulness by refusing to take seriously discussions about themes that nevertheless become apparent and present in these short stories. In *Qu'Inferno*, Pignon stars in a 9-page story entitled "Histórias de merda cheiram mal.." (lit., "Shitty stories stink!"). Pignon is walking along a street while seemingly sharing advices with his reader. The advice is about bowel movements, but then he starts to explain the consequences of this control:

> "You'll see. It's a brave new world! Not only you'll feel lighter, relaxed, as you'll contribute to reduce the effects of authoritarianism and hypocrisy...//which steal innocence throughout the world, inducing fear and stupidification! You don't have to be fucked in the ass to shit better anymore!"

The diatribe continues, linking emptying the bowels to "enlightenment" and "enviable lucidity," until Pignon declares that he's thirsty of talking so much and enters a tavern to drink. But this textual mechanism is recurrent in many of the strips. While it seems that the character is referring to a vulgar thing, the wording seems to imply a more profound, general, social sense. It's as if the character (and the author through it) wished to discuss important themes but, lest he ends up by pontificating, prefers to disguise it with such rude manners and language, expecting nonetheless that the shock may make his listeners or readers "wake up." To a certain extent, it almost reads like a typical zen koan, where the master farts or slaps his student towards enlightenment.

Smallness.

As we can surmise from many of these examples, we are not talking about huge commotions or overwhelming events within Portuguese society, but everyday occurrences and obstacles to small groups' civic liberties that do not elicit outrageous responses from the general public, but rather mainly indifference, or worse, complaisance with the authority's point of view. Which comes as no surprise as, if any mainstream media attention is given to the events or the groups' struggle, it is to depict these people as "the uncontented," "the permanently dissatisfied," the "naysayers," "dissenters," "feminist killjoys," "the illegal," and so on. Once again we see how trauma is a keyword in this context, allowing for a wider spectrum than usually thought of. As Dorothea Olkowski argues, and especially within the contemporary European world, many are the "sufferings brought on by society, by our fellow human beings" that are much more prevalent than the "big issues."[108] Olkowski continues, explaining that these are

> "sufferings that range from the great to the small: from war, poverty, oppressive governments, and families to excessive and diverse cruelties and insults, panics and shames. Here size and spread are insignificant since the latter, the *small sufferings*, can ruin a life as easily as worldwide traumas" (my emphasis; 2007: 47-48)

[108] Despite the known terrorist attacks in London, Madrid, Paris and Brussels, which I will not address in this dissertation.

I would like to introduce here the notion of *micro-narratives*. This term has nothing to do here with the simple size of the story. As Pierre Alferi writes, "Être bref, cela ne s'est jamais résumé à faire court" (2016: 159). The very idea of *shortness* can be thought from either a stylistic/rhetorical or a theoretical perspective. On the first sense, it does not mean any sort of value judgement but rather the choices that come about the authors in offering too little or too much of their story, which will lead to a certain effect in the reader (Schlanger 2016), whether euphoria or sheer boredom (Schneider 2016). It is a textual strategy. When one thinks about the second perspective, one shifts to a consideration of micro-narratives as, tentatively, one way or the other, something necessarily different from narrative in general, albeit without being *anti-narrative, for* "...the difficulty of narrativisation should not be equated with the absence of narrativity" (Baetens 2001: 96). There is still the possibility of describing these micro-narratives by referring to narratological categories.

If one understands *narrative* as the combination of a story (the ocurrence of events) and a narrative discourse which conveys it (its mediation), one could say that within a micronarrative we can identify the events themselves but not their order, and even less so their causal relationships. Granted, causality is not a synonym of order, but nevertheless causality imposes itself as the teleology of order. In them time is, in the known Shakespearean turn, "out of joint." Not that the recognisable narrative elements that may be present (such as characters, actions, an identifiable spatial unit, and so on) simply lack an "internal time sequence" (i.e., according to Seymour Chatman, the "the duration of the sequence of events that constitute the plot," 1990: 9), but that they hint at its existence but do not provide the reader with enough cartographic data that would allow for its reconstruction and ordering. Indeed, the joints are wholly absent. Still following Alferi, one should consider them less as a "figure de mots" than a "'figure de pensées' temporelles et causales" (2016: 162).

We are not referring then to one-page comics or the publication format known as "mini-comics" but to textual strategies that question typical narrative structures such as causality, the moralistic role of heroicity and naturalism (Alferi 2016: 179), temporal order, the relationship between identifiable parts, between the eventual characters, and even the characterization of the figures in the story. It leads to a postponement of the story's finality (Alferi 2016), to "...l'effet de réfraction du singulier romanesque" (Schlanger 2016: 15).

In principle, the atomized piece I will discuss presently by Joana Figueiredo would be considered a non-narrative piece, perhaps even a non-comics piece from a more classical perspective, but it does play many of the categories usually present in comics-production. The interrupted cycle by Seabra Lopes would be considered a non-textual entity, and José Feitor's zine (more of which later) would be seen solely as a collection of illustrations with short captions. However, not only do they exist as "une entité distincte capable de produire de l'effet, voire du plaisir?" (Schlanger 2016: 115) as they also create "...la brèche qu'elles ouvraient dans la prose narrative" (Alferi 2016: 167). Once again, my aim is not to create hierarchies of judgement, but to open up a space (*la bréche*) to discuss things usually overlooked when considering comics in broader terms.

Joana Figueiredo is an artist who has participated since the late 1990s in a number of fanzines, whether solo or in collaborative work with other artists, or even collective anthologies. Some of her most successful fanzine series were *Na verdade tenho 60 anos* ("Actually I'm 60 years old") and *Osso da Pilinha* ("Penis' bone," which she co-created with Marcos Farrajota, about their relationship). She has created also a large number of images for book covers, concerts, fairs and meetings posters, making her a sort of underground superstar. Some of her solo publications were printed under the name of "Crime Creme" and she has signed also a number of works as "Jucifer." However, the use of the editorial name or her pseudonym is not at all continuous or systematic.

The piece I would like to concentrate on is called *Post Shit*. In late January, 2008, a small art gallery called Yron (which meanwhile closed) organized an exhibition called *Quadradinhos, Histórias Postadas* (something like, "Comics [literally, 'little squares', another name for comics in Portuguese], Posted Stories." Seven artists were invited to create comics-related stories using an unusual, then new format of 3M's Post-It adhesive notes, which would be attached to the walls of the exhibition. The main goal was not only to create new pieces, of course, but come about with new ways of thinking about the presentation of comics in art-related spaces, three-dimensional environments, the division or porosity between artistic disciplines, and so on.

Most of the artists simply created their stories by using each individual post-it note as a panel, and most "compositions" (i.e., their distribution in a particular shape) of these panels on the wall followed the habitual grid or linear presentation of the stories as if on a

printed page (at least one author re-published his story in a conventional publication later on, where the original specificity was completely eradicated). But, contrary to the majority, Joana "Jucifer" Figueiredo took full advantage of the open-ended nature of these objects. Figueiredo created 60-plus images that were seemingly carelessly put up on the wall, and that people could move around and re-glue them as they saw fit [see montage, Image 38]. The images show a multitude of characters in the most varied situations without any clear coherence between them.

The artist would present this piece on two other occasions in other comics-related exhibition contexts,[109] but without the possibility for the public to manipulate the notes. She also published a small booklet collecting the images that same year of 2008, in a very small run, giving the piece its name, *Post Shit*. As of course, this publication restricted the freedom of the original project, but turned it into an actually printed, published object instead of a singular art object.

What we see in the images is more or less organizable into specific spaces or categories: a class room, a hospital, a war drill, meeting rooms, industrial machinery, a command centre, and so on. Apart from the drawing style, which presents figures that seem to be something between human and pig-faced people, the characters have a few other common traits, such as a symbol they use in armbands or hats (a Greek cross on a white circle on black background, reminding one at the same time of the Red Cross and the Nazi symbol, an ambiguity which is purposeful), or in the professional uniforms they wear – military, medic, overalls, etc. But there are also characters in casual attire, with or without the symbol. Moreover, because some situations seem close to one another, we may imagine that there are recurrent characters. There are many scenes that could be imaginable as army-related activities; others take place in hospitals, business meetings, an industrial plant floor, an art class, a kindergarten, and so on. There is only one instance of a double panel, with two post-it notes making up a continuous image of two soldiers carrying what seems to be a religious-themed painting. But it is impossible to say that these are "the same places" or that these are "the same characters." This is not an Oubapian exercise from which a reader could surmise a multitude of linear, perceivable and therefore naturalisable combinations (a re-territorialised image, to return to Deleuze-Guattari's terms).

Some of the images contain text in speech balloons, but they do not help in understanding any better the hypothetical narrative situations, as a one-panel cartoon

[109] *Tinta nos Nervos* (2011) and *SemConsenso* (2015-2016).

eventually would. Three apparently young men with long canine or feline ears and with casual t-shirts depicting caprine creatures raise their right hands, palms open outwards and declare, "I swear!" But there are no interlocutors that could explain such action. Three people sitting in a long table look outwards and say "We will think about it." Is this a business meeting? Did someone propose something? One of the soldiers that carry the painting on the double-panel image says, "I don't like steak!" Can we link this one image to another man holding two steaks above an oil drum who says, "What beautiful steaks!"? Can we associate all the images where people move about or comment on paintings and drawings? Can we create a sort of dialogue between all the apparent businessmen and casually dressed people that appear sitting on desks and tables and seem to discuss something? Many of the images have actually no text, and at least four have people saying "No!"

Do they belong to the same diegetic universe, apart from the fact they have been created within the same productive context? There is no comprehensible shared diegetic context for these characters, no time and space unity, no linearity, no recurrent characters beyond question, no action-consequence relationships between each "panel" or "scene." But "the imperative to find narrative coherence is so embedded" (Luckhurst, 2008: 85) that we look for the links that would allow us to consider it as a coherent fictive universe. As one reads in Edgar Allan Poe's short story "The Gold-Bug:"

> "This is the usual effect of such coincidences. The mind struggles to establish a connection - a sequence of cause and effect - and, being unable to do so, suffers a species of temporary paralysis" (apud Ngai, 2005: 254)

This temporal slowing down is brought about, within *Post Shit*'s exhibition mode, by the variable spatial distribution of the post-it notes on the wall, which invited a virtual spatial commutability of sorts, and only through an accumulation and multi-legibility effect, and not a linear reading of those images, is it possible to access its phantasmatical narrative. From each crystalised image, the reader-spectator could proceed to a free montage with the next, a movement at once momentaneous and reversible, towards a signifying whole, even if fleeting. As Jill Bennett writes in *Empathic Vision*, "micronarratives that constitute storytelling after postmodernism are not just discrete events, in this case, but events that overlap and envelop each other" (Bennett, 2005: 82). Whereas I do not believe Bennett is using "micronarratives" in the same kind of theoretical sense mentioned above, it's quite fitting that such a word appears here.

The minimalism of the situations and the repetition of gestures, contexts, facial expressions, and even phrases of these characters turn each discrete note/panel into a unit that may or may not "overlap and envelop each other" but do create the phantasmatical idea of association that is hard to describe in more habitual narrative terms. As spectators of a wall filled with loose panels, we are forced to retrace our steps, or change the associations between different images, leading to "a drastic slowdown of language, a rhetorical enactment of its fatigue" (Ngai 2005: 255), which Sianne Ngai associates with works of art that deal with the survival of trauma.

Moreover, this slowing down and open-endedness of *Post Shit* - somewhat like Daniel Seabra Lopes' series of destruction scenes - affects powerfully the reader-spectator. Many of the scenes seem to be related with some kind of tension, not only due to the presence of military personnel, but also scenes straight out of the corporate world, teaching institutions, factory work, hospital scenes, and menial jobs that create a sort of middle- to working-class environment where the assuredness and the safety of narrative is denied. "It is this change in temporal organization that in turn slows down the interpreter - as if the loss of strong links in the text paradoxically strengthens an affective link between text and reader, transferring the text's 'stupor' to him or her" (Ngai 2005: 256). The reader may not be sure of what make do of *Post Shit*, but an overall anxiety is bound to emerge, just as it does with Lopes', Feitor's and Carneiro's work, especially because there is no definitive meaning that one can attribute to it.

It may seem that the events and happenings represented within the scenes of these works by Carneiro, Figueiredo, Lopes, Pepedelrey and Borges are not associated to overwhelming shocks, but as the insidiousness of these small economic, social and everyday pressures accumulate, they corrupt a "normal" quotidian life. In *Spectral Evidence. The Photography of Trauma*, Ulrich Baer refers to very specific historical contingencies, when he discusses how "one of the terrible effects of trauma is precisely the replacement of the normal lifeworld with a suffocatingly hermetic violent universe" (2002: 21), which seems a very apt description of *Post Shit*. But in the same breath he also opens it up to the possibility of "prolonged trauma" and how its victims are "unable to envision a different universe or question their violent surroundings" (idem: 21-22). Whereas in the case of Joana Figueiredo's characters this is true, considering that the "lack" of coordination between each panel-unit does not allow even for the coalescence of a storyworld, which in turn would allow for a fictive beyond, Miguel Carneiro's ongoing

exploitations of style and format open up its fictional universe to a different configuration. Daniel Seabra Lopes's piece has a more coherent organization, but still open to debate whether we are witnessing a consequential, unitary action of the same characters, an issue which becomes even more complicated in the artists from *Buraco* and elsewhere. In fact, the way that the characters of Carneiro's oeuvre, especially M. Pignon, address directly the reader, or question their own existence as characters, inflects Baer's words: it is as if Pignon is able to fathom a different universe, but only to fall back into it once again, fatally, inexorably. Pignon is like a "disobedient machine," which "behaves autonomously and *proves* its autonomy by misbehaving" (orig. emph.; Bukatman, 2012: 146). Like Töpffer's characters, Sammy Sneeze, Krazy Kat or Coyote, Pignon always suffers the slapstick, violent shtick that end his stories.

The relationship of comics and the political (in both senses of the word, that is, the common meaning and the Rancière-influenced one) is never a result of pure circumstance. As in any other art form, there is always "a very clear consciousness of the social implications of artistic practices" (Baetens 1998: 124).

In *Formes et Politiques de la Bande Dessinée*, Jan Baetens zeroes in on the Belgian collective Fréon, which was a predominant powerhouse in the comics avant-garde scene of the 1990s throughout Europe. The theoretician identifies four strategies that he calls "refusals" (1998: 131 and ff.), which set up a certain visual field that is conductive to the political positioning I've been addressing throughout this chapter, and that I do believe to be still quite pertinent. The first refusal is that of "the homogeneity of matter as a style" (131), that is to say, the refusal of integrating or founding a "school," a recognizable common style. Indeed, many of the authors we are dealing with in this chapter not only do not share common traits with one another, even if participating often in the same initiatives and publications, as sometimes they try out different instruments, strategies and approaches that makes one imagine a multiple authorship. That is particularly true with authors such as Miguel Carneiro, Jucifer and José Feitor. Each new project has different aims, which underlines the flexibility of the artists' practice.

The second refusal is that of "the tutelage of genre." As I've explained in the contextualizing chapter, Portugal does not offer the possibility to most comics artists to publish their work in common, commercial categories as those one finds in stronger markets such as the North American or the French-Belgian ones. And even though there are examples of people working in book format (which is slightly distinct from the "album

format," and points out to a legitimizing form for contemporary comics), such as Miguel Rocha and Marco Mendes, of course, the authors of this chapter opt for other more atomized forms, from the classical black-and-white photocopied and stapled fanzine to a category-less object (Miguel Carneiro's posters and silkscreened books or Jucifer's post-its).

Yet another trait is that in the distance created in relation to a narrative nature that, so often, is seen as an essential (essentialist?) trace of comics as a whole. Amanda Baeza's booklet was a narrative piece, sure. But many of the authors in this chapter try to come up with different strategies in the association of the multiple images they present, sometimes also at a material level. Lopes' shorter piece could be read as a narrative one as well, despite the faint narratological elements, but in the *Futuro Primitivo* book it was atomized into a larger, non- or anti-narrative sequence of heterogeneous works. Bruno Borges' one-pager seems to point out to a certain *stasis*. *Post Shit*, with its collection of narratively unrelated scenes drawn on individual post-it sheets, points out to quite different regimes and protocols of reading. José Feitor, in the small booklet I will refer to further ahead, creates cumulative effects rather than sequential.

The final refusal identified by Baetens in relation to the Fréon collective is "the expulsion of a given support, that of the *book*" (132), which should in this particular context be understood less as a textual form than as the material means and driving force of introduction in a market. Granted, we referred already to Rocha and Mendes as creating volumes that entered the dissemination and reception circles of the book world, but many of the artists have elected as their first platform of presentation the web, the exhibition gallery, or even the street with their posters, not to mention fanzines and homemade booklets that are way off the official, mainstream commercial venues. And even in the cases of books proper, these are independent projects devoid of the standardized decisions of the marketeers from big conglomerates. It is important to bear in mind how "the text-object has a distinctive physical presence which is constitutive of the modes of signification the form makes possible" (Poletti, 2008: 88).

The Mundane.

One of ways these authors address small traumas is the way they focus on the utter banality of everyday life. And one can interpret this attention to the trivial, instead of towards "bigger themes" as actually a resistant act in relationship to the temptation of generalizing and creating sweeping statements about Portugal or the Portuguese.

The Portuguese philosopher and literary theoretician Silvina Rodrigues Lopes vehemently criticizes a certain fashion of philosophizing about the so-called "Portuguese spirit" as practiced among many intellectuals (she mentions as her main examples Eduardo Lourenço and José Gil; Lopes 2010). In her essay "Portugal sem destino," Lopes quotes from a multitude of literary examples in which the Portuguese "personality" or "geist" is characterized in mystifying terms, to the detriment of more grounded experiences in the quotidian, disconnected from collective inscriptions such as "the people." More often than not, this unifying notion means presenting a cluster of traits that become compulsory to any individual that belongs to that collective. If he or she do not share such a trait then it will not be a part of the said collective in the "proper" way. A typical sentence is the one that starts with, "He is not a good Portuguese who..." adding then things as diverse as "who does not love fado," "does not enjoy football," "does not defend bullfighting," and so on.

The *mundane* then, becomes a key political word in this immediate context. This is not simply an automatic, realist reflection and/or expression of a past experience. Quotidian life must be associated here with the daily, political effort of escaping the sovereign power, the control society, in order to attain an independent subjectivity. Which becomes undoubtedly something to be fought against by power itself.

Without quoting Rancière at any point in this small text, Lopes seems to have in mind the French author's notion of the *partage du sensible* when she writes:

> "Of course, governments will respond to the claims they do not satisfy by undermining the very force that sustains such claims: this undermining may characterize the claims as subversive or may even consider them nonexistent. But this does not mean that they are turned into 'non-actions,' into 'child's play' or into 'non-performative actions.' [What this is] It's called propaganda, manipulation of information, and so on." (my translation; 2010: 234)[110]

Paying attention then to a grounded quotidian is a political act. Some authors may explore such a quotidian within a historical modality, such as Miguel Rocha, as we've studied in his respective chapter, both solo, as in his extraordinary but devoid of salvific tones *As pombinhas do Senhor Leitão*, and in collaboration, as the exercise in exorcism *Salazar, agora na hora da sua morte*, with João Paulo Cotrim. We have also addressed Marco Mendes, who, with his *Diário Rasgado*, responds to the state of affairs through a

[110] The expressions within inverted commas are quotes from José Gil, which Lopes is criticizing.

naked realism mingled with derisory humour and fantasy, without however proposing "solutions" or entrepreneurship, which could integrate it in the normalizing discourses of liberal capitalism.

Other authors, such as Marcos Farrajota, José Smith Vargas, Nuno Sousa, Carlos Pinheiro and Tiago Baptista, each in their own way, also use the quotidian as their prime matter. These are also acts of resistance, in the sense that they use seemingly banal episodes to comment upon systematic economic and social stresses upon Portuguese society.

Tiago Baptista, from a younger generation, shapes his own subjectification through irony, addressing (his) life in the suburbs. This space is not seen as a sign of a dehumanizing *non-place* but a heterotopic space of citizenship. Baptista is a visual artist, a painter, and has created a number of short comics stories in many fanzines, some of which he publishes himself, such as the collective titles *Cléopatra* and *Preto no Branco*. In 2011, he had an anthology published by Oficina do Cego and the association a9)))) entitled *Fábricas, baldios, fé e pedras atiradas à lama* (meaning "Factories, vacant lots, faith and stones thrown at the mud"). It collects many different pieces, from artist's statements in the shape of self-ironical deconstructions to cartoons appropriating popular forms of comics to comment on the state of contemporary art and artists vis-à-vis economic crisis in Portugal, and a series of self-fiction dialogues, in which an avatar of the author watches Hollywood mainstream movies with world-class cinema directors (Manoel de Oliveira and *The Spy Next Door*, Truffaut and *Date Night*, Tarkovski and *Marmaduke*, and Bergman, who gives up going to the theatre, given the appalling offer).

I want to focus on "Um dia no subúrbio" ("A day in the suburbs"), a 5-page story in which the author himself reminisces about the way he spends his day in the suburbs, where he lives [see montage, Image 39]. As the "camera" pans over the many different vistas of the suburbs, the captions explain how interesting the diversity of architecture and life is in such a place. Even "graffiti are very interesting and their messages have a deep emotive and dramatic charge." The "nice restaurants" refer to a McDonald's franchise, and horrible noises – that later we understand to be gun shots – are not interpreted as dangerous because the narrator feels safe within the walls of his comfortable room. The narrator also shows us the cover of vinyl records that he likes to hear, from Brazilian singer-author Elis Regina, to Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique*, and Swans' *Greed*. On the one hand, the narrator seems to confirm that suburban life perpetuates a zombie-like life among empty lots, franchises and an utter lack of communality. But on the other hand, one can read it,

perhaps, against the grain. The first images, almost four complete pages, show only disconnected scenes of the suburbs with the narrator's captions, giving the story a very disenchanted, distant tone. When he enters the scene, he is always sitting on his sofa, somewhat akin to Spiegelman's character from the 1973 one-page story "I don't get around much anymore." Additionally, the presence of a Swans' album, and their highly political lyrics, works as a sort of meta-comment. This points out, in a somewhat oblique manner, to the possibility of reading "A day in the suburbs" as precisely a deconstruction of the current haughty attitude towards the uncategorisable experience of living in the suburbs: dependency upon lower rents, longer commuting hours, less cultural offers, and so on.

Baptista published another short story in a more general interest publication, *Gerador*. This short, entitled "A ribeira de carenque" [Image 40], seems to take us to a stroll to observe a small rivulet that separates the town limits of Amadora and Sintra, just outside Lisbon. A sort of no-man's land between urban and rural settings, this stream is surrounded with very small agricultural plots, where people grow subsistence crops (cabbages, onions, green peas and so on). The narrator describes almost dispassionately this landscape and the things one may find in it. The last page shows a regular grid, listing the crops. The final text, which starts on the previous page, reads, "Sometimes, I wonder why people use such a plot to take something from it, for food but also for emotional reasons, with no middlemen. Some feeling of resistance, disobedience even. (…) People need to believe in another system, to believe in that which they sow, that they see growing from the ground. // They can believe in these peas. / These onions (…)." The last panel shows a plot where the plants are not sprouting from it yet, so that the caption reads, "Here, we don't know. But believe me, it's the future." Without referring directly to the everyday economic needs that leads people (perhaps even employed in an urban setting) to grow their own vegetables, Baptista underlines this reality as almost a literal illustration of Rancière's creation a new space of expression, with the palpable fruits of the earth.

Another discussion that can be seen as a tension between urbanity and a rural setting can also be detected in José Feitor's project. This artist created an enigmatic oblique autobiography as well, called *Uma perna maior que a outra* ("A leg bigger than the other"; published in 2014). The small self-published 40-plus page booklet was issued by Feitor's own self-imprint, Imprensa Canalha, through which he edits and publishes his own work or other artists' that are to be found in the *terrain vague* in-between comics, illustration, and graphzines. *Perna* is a book that presents a collection of 22 drawings printed on the

right-hand page with a short titled paragraph on the left-side page, which acts as both a very short story and a commentary upon the image. The author states elsewhere in the book that these are "reflections on a point of departure and its respective reckoning" (n.p.).

Some of the images are "graphic appropriations" of a group of photographs by António Gonçalves Pedro, a countryside photographer from Mora who was discovered within the artistic circles around the early 2000s (a compilation was published in 2003 entitled *António Gonçalves Pedro Fotógrafo Mora*, by Dom Quixote [Image 41]). Feitor sustains, in the booklet, that when he saw Pedro's photographs, he "gazed once again into his shame like in a mirror," which helps one to read the texts under a slightly distorted autobiographical tone with Catholic overtones. The images by Feitor create a more or less fantastical *menagerie* of characters that remind one of a certain rustic Portuguese culture that only blasé urbanites may think is long gone (as they would judge the suburbs from the outside). This a semi-rural world, outside the main city centres of the country, and where despite the social and economic developments afforded by the post-April the 25th democratic regime, have not embraced the complexities of post-modernity. Rough language is used, rustic traditions are upheld, the hoe is preferred to the school satchel, and the traditional predetermined roles of men, women, of the *pater familias* and the village fool are secure. And as a permanent hovering shadow, the oppressive religious overtones of confession and sinning, that the narrator's text tries to undermine.

Through a literary labour and the transformation of the images, Feitor creates a fictionalization that at one time reveals hidden meanings and brings to the fore a disquieting experience [see montage, Image 42]. One image shows a man holding what seems to be a haloed child wrapped in cloth. The man's penis is exposed and smoke or a floating sperm escapes into the air. Two other men stand within a circle, with a dog next to them, one of them holding a candle, and outside the circle lies the skinned corpse of a rabbit. A grieving woman, with a crucifix around her neck, looks at what seems a portrait of a devil. The caption reads, "'Manumission.' And even so, at the very end, when those beasts crocked, the women still weep for them. Such was the biggest mystery." Despite its elliptic nature, one understand that by "beasts" the narrator is referring to the men, brutal and oppressive, that are able to elicit love from the women they've mistreated throughout an entire life, even after they're dead.

Another picture shows a school boy, with a noticeable scar around his mouth. The text reminisces: "'Master.' We went without wanting to. There was almost nothing there. I

don't remember anything, or barely. No wonder. I remember the rain and the slaps in the face. And the fucking smock. And the teacher. We grew up so fast, so we could escape quickly."

The author is exposing himself and the culture he grew up in but also hiding it, by never using the usual marks that would allow the reader to understand the "autobiographical pact" or even the necessary elements to perceive it as an auto-fictional approach. Somewhat like Miguel Carneiro's *Pignon* stories, Feitor's work can also be read as a distorted autobiography. It is only by reading it attentively in coordination with the extra-textual elements within the book that one hints at the possibilities of reading *Perna* as a slightly autobiographic project, beyond its purported limits, touching its "constitutive ambivalence" (Gilmore, 2001: 7).

The poses of the characters – mimicking photographic sessions – the short paragraph inflecting its meaning and a short ink blot that expands as we turn the pages, makes one imagine that *Perna* is a sort of votive booklet, an ex-voto, a more or less disguised confession. We see the people involved in the narrated episodes, and some connection to a central life. Such a decentring of the autobiographical project through a religious context falls in line into a sub-category, if you will, of autobiographical comics that may find its origin in Justin Green's *Binky Brown Meets the Holy Virgin Mary*, and would find companionship in some of the projects by Robert Crumb, Chester Brown, Joe Matt and a few others. Within autobiography at large, this also opens up issues of historical development and ontology of the genre, as discussed by Leigh Gilmore in *The Limits of Autobiography. Trauma and Testimony*:

> "I invoke religious language here in part to recall Western autobiography's debt to the confession, a practice that institutionalizes penance and penalty as self-expression. The confession welds together an official and a spiritual discourse in a way that conflates a functional boundary between the public and the private. (…) In the imagined encounter with such judgments, many writers seek grounds other than the explicitly testimonial for self-representation. In swerving from the centre of autobiography towards its outer limits, they convert constraint into opportunity." (2001: 14)

Within that same book, Gilmore addresses the mode through which trauma-related autobiography projects may further non-representative strategies, as when writers (or comics authors) use what Gayatri Spivak calls a "ghostly witness" (apud Gilmore 2001: 20). Gilmore elaborates:

> "Texts that are concerned with self-representation and trauma offer a strong case for seeing that in the very condition of autobiography (and not the obstacles it offers for us to overcome) there is no transparent language of identity despite the demand to produce one. As controversial as any evidence of shaping may be in a trauma text – and what text is not shaped? – part of what we must call healing lies in the assertion of creativity. The ability to write beyond the silencing meted out by trauma is an achievement I want to recognize here." (24)

In the cases of Carneiro, Figueiredo and Feitor, the autobiographical project goes through a radical decentring, abstracting and fictionalizing project that backs off from the purported "transparent language" of identity. In fact, the very artistic work of figuration points toward such dissolution of identity. On the one hand, one could come up with a supposed contrast between styles. Say, Miguel Rocha's sumptuous colours and textured collages, Marco Mendes' virtuoso intricacy, Tiago Baptista's filigree realism, and Miguel Carneiro's shifting excesses, against the slick, chiaroscuro approach of José Feitor and the simple, fluid line drawings of Joana Figueiredo. But more importantly than an appreciation of the superficial effects of style and drawing techniques is the understanding of common representational strategies that echo similar concerns about self-representation (even if the "self" is played within non-autobiographical work). That is how we see some affinities between Feitor's oozing bodies, Carneiro's shifting styles and Figueiredo's exchangeable characters.

The body is always already a mediated and material thing. In fact, and to return to a quote used before, it is "perhaps the most awkward materiality of all" (Highmore, 2010: 119). The affordances of comics, and these independent examples at that, are brought to the fore through the multitude of styles among the artists, the internal changes of each project, and the way it connects to a sort of menagerie of characters touched by unsaid, unclear, small but pervasive traumas. I am always wary of the dangers of reading whatever work under the auspices of psychoanalytical tools. I take in account Susannah Radstone's caveats towards the dangers of a "dominant trend in memory research today, that is the extension and application of terms associated with personal memory to domains beyond the personal" (2005: 137). As Radstone particularizes:

> "Taken together, the terms *mediation* and *articulation* militate against any analysis of memory as reflective of or determined by the past, and against any notion that a text - a memoir, for instance - constitutes an unproblematic reflection of memory. More than that,

though, these terms together remind us that texts and practices are complexly related to the broader social formation in which their meanings are forged" (my emphasis, 134-135)

"Memory is always mediated," Radstone continues, and "…it is simply not possible to argue that certain modes of personal memory [i.e., written memoirs, a memorial statue, etc.] give more direct access to that past than others" (135, 136). Following literary scholar Isobel Armstrong, I am considering the medium of comics as a cultural medium, that is to say, one that "provides a space of (serious) play, a transitional mode where knowledge and meaning can be constantly disarticulated and reassembled" (apud Luckhurst 2008: 79).

My use of "menagerie" for the depiction of the characters, especially in the specific visual and composition (and also of publication) strategies of Carneiro, Figueiredo and Feitor is purposeful. Usually, the exhibition of peoples goes through a, at one time, political and aesthetic paradox, both implying, however, an "erasure." This phenomenon has been recently studied by art historian Georges Didi-Huberman, and presents itself either under the shape of an *excessive* exposition, with spectacular and commercial ends, or as a *deficient* exposition, through censorship, which can be, according to the historian, economic or political (2012).

Excessive exposition leads quite often to the emergence of a stereo-typified image of a people without documenting the historical processes that may have led to a specific situation (one could argue that this is what happens in Tiago Baptista's ironic take on suburban life). That's the way that circumstantial, partial or incomplete traits may appear as pure, ahistorical, essentialist, fixed for good, characteristics: "The Portuguese are a people of soft temperament" or "are brave and resistant" are some of the oft-repeated sentences, which Silvina Rodrigues Lopes discusses in her aforementioned essay (2010).

Deficient exposition is precisely what takes place by the current, ongoing, projected and ever-expanded extinction of spaces that Rancière would call "common" (the visible, sensible spaces of Es.Col.A, the Biblioteca Popular, but also the very room to discuss independent publications, and so on).

Rancière's "distribution of the sensible" is about forms of inclusion and exclusion that constitute the very participation in common life, whose roots are to be found in (daily) experience. It has to do with the political process of producing various and variegated images that, first of all, denounce inequalities of the very condition of possibility of expression. To return to Rodrigues Lopes, it is a form of avoiding "political elision," which

more often than not "take the shape of an identity stake" (my trans.; 236). This, to a certain extent, helps us rethink Deleuze's and Guattari's notion of the collectivity when considering minor practices. Instead of looking solely as any action as taking part of a symbolical economy that stands for the collective, each individual creates a particular, singular perspective upon a micro-experience. It is by looking to a certain quotidian, to the singular person, to other spaces where other sensibilities take place, other experiences, that one expands the notion of what can be said, of what can be seen, of what can be expressed. Like the vegetable patches of Baptista's story.

Despite the representation of seemingly violent episodes, social and economic tensions and an inheritance of oppressive religious and political principles that prevents one from struggling against or exposing domestic abuse, class difference and institutional tyrannies, we do not see the characters of these authors overcoming the "problem" or presenting a clear-cut solution or anything that may pass as a "happy ending." We remain within Ngai's "ugly feelings," "minor affects that are far less intentional or object-directed, and thus more likely to produce political and aesthetic ambiguities" (2005: 20). Such ambiguity is corroborated quite often by the very materiality of production of the pieces, within the so-called Portuguese "alternative" circles, that come up with "multiple and various ways of heaping and cohering" (idem: 291). From Daniel Seabra Lopes' series being shuffled in an editorial project, Figueiredo's post it notes scattered unorderly on the wall, or Carneiro's many episodes of *Pignon* never coalescing into a coherent unit, these are works presented as "lumps," as "examples of an incapacity to organize discrete elements into a coherent form" (idem: 289).

A Return to Trauma.

The fact that I have brought together many forms of fictive, experimental, unusual comics that do not address clear representations of what one may consider "traumatic lives," and the elasticity that these texts seem to impose on an understanding of what constitutes trauma does not wish to underplay the factual importance of real-life trauma. Once again, I want to underline that we are discussing works of art, cultural productions, texts that mediate symbols and experiences into significant, analysable forms. I do believe, however, that considering them opens up the scope of *what* we can discuss, and *how* we can discuss it, using the many tools developed within Trauma Studies. Indeed, the relationship of these deterritorialised forms to trauma may seem to go against the grain of one of Trauma Studies' central tenets, that of the unrepresentability of trauma.

Nevertheless, representation does not necessarily mean "identification," that is to say, a visual or narrative form that would have in itself sufficient explanatory power. When reading comics (or any other art form for that matter), critically and analytically, we have to remind ourselves at all times that we are not discussing actual people. The characters are fictional creations, even when there might be autobiographical connections (the clear case of Marco Mendes, the less clear one of José Feitor or Miguel Carneiro). And the authors are an abstract entity, sufficiently detached from the empirical minds and bodies of the people who have created these texts and images.

Comics is an art form that, in its own act of emergence, creates a sufficiently detached relationship with whatever trauma it may have led its author to create, whatever situation it responds to, that makes it always already an act of mourning, a process of working-through, even if that trauma is somewhat unnamed, unrepresented, invisible, unphantomable. The reading of comics through trauma studies, however, provides us both with penetrating analytical tools but also with critical caveats. As Karyn Ball writes in her introduction to *Traumatizing Theory*,

> "[p]sychoanalysis humbles our desire to attribute too much conscious intention to any art, literature, or theory, yet this recognition that not all elements in a work are intentional does not undermine our power to treat them as material to its meaning" (Ball: 2007: xxxvii).

The criticism of the supposedly absolute unrepresentability of trauma has surfaced in the work of some authors, being the most vocal Ruth Leys and Susannah Radstone. The latter has presented very strong critiques of the work of Cathy Caruth, as well as of Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, as for instances in "Trauma Theory: Contexts, Politics, Ethics." In this article, Radstone states the problem thus:

> "In place of theories that emphasize the conventional, mediated, illusory, deferred or imaginary status of the relation between representation and 'actuality' or 'event,' trauma theory suggests that the relation between representation and 'actuality' might be reconceived as one constituted by the absence of traces" (Radstone 2007: 12)

Quoting Laub, if we consider trauma to be "an event without a witness," the corollary to such positioning is that it "takes the traumatic *event* as its theoretical foundation" (original emphasis, idem). Radstone is interested, as well as Ruth Leys, which she quotes, in a critique of the meeting of neuroscience and psychoanalysis – as the case of Van der Kolk, whom Caruth quotes substantially – according to which "the traumatic

event is encoded in the brain in a different way from ordinary memory" (idem: 13). This has a powerful consequence. Radstone writes:

> "According to this this model [the anti-mimetic one], the production of memories is no longer understood to be linked to the unconscious, unbiddable, processes of the inner world. Instead, memories are understood to be the unmediated, though unassimilable records of traumatic events. These memories are understood to undergo 'dissociation,' meaning that they come to occupy a specially designated area of the mind that precludes their retrieval. Whereas in the mimetic theory, trauma produces psychical dissociation from the self, in the anti-mimetic theory, it is the record of an unassimilable event which is dissociated from memory" (idem: 14)

This brings about two consequences. On the one hand, it leads to the idea that trauma is a "purely external event," where the subject's own individuality, personality, desires, have no part, and on the other that that very same subject is "fully constituted," bringing again to mind the problems we pointed out in the first chapter about who can be considered "traumatisable" and which situations "traumatogenic." An alternative take on this stance will allow then for a negotiation between the unconscious and the event itself, a certain degree of mediation that is opened to the specificities of the chosen medium, its history, and its context.

"What is lost—to put this even more baldly—is that fundamental psychoanalytic assumption concerning the challenge to the subject's *sovereignty* posed by the unconscious and its wayward processes" [the "radical ungovernability of the unconscious" (18)] (…) "it is the unconscious production of associations to a memory, rather than qualities intrinsic to certain events, that is understood to render a memory traumatic" (idem: 14)

To put it another way, and coming closer to media-related issues, if we are to believe that "trauma is a crisis in representation, then this generates narrative *possibility* just as much as *impossibility*, a compulsive outpouring of attempts to formulate narrative knowledge" (Luckhurst 2008: 83, original emphases).

The few examples that we have discussed in this chapter make exactly an effort to the creation of narrative (and not so narrative) possibilities of addressing traumatogenic situations, especially the impediment of finding a fair public space for political and personal expression.

Conclusion.

This dissertation has attempted a discussion of very different types of comics produced in the past two decades in Portugal that, one way or the other, have acted out or worked through the pervasiveness of a number of problems that may be described as "small traumas." From unemployment to precarity, from economic and social strife to deep-set melancholy, a paradoxical feeling of impotence in relation to the tension and violent emotions within and without, and somewhat clumsy reactions to the exercise of an utterly foreign, abstract power by distant, disembodied political bodies, many are the traumatogenic subject matters addressed by the authors collected here. Moreover, this is done through works that stylistically, narratively and materially are quite different from one another, creating an almost anomic constellation.

All of them, or so I believe, and hope to have shown, produce the possibility for an approach to trauma that is rather different from the core tenet of "classical" or "non-mimetic" Trauma Theory: that of its impossibility of being represented and even known. Point in fact, G. H. Hartman considers "traumatic knowledge" a contradiction in terms (1995: 537). But one might shift the framework through which trauma is thought. Namely, to a framework that can point out the ways in which "[t]raumatic and artistic kinds of knowledge conspire to produce their own mode of recognition" (idem: 545). Comics produces its own mode of recognition, as Dominick LaCapra writes about Spiegelman's *Maus*, through their unique "tensely interactive processes of acting-out and working-through" (LaCapra 1998: 149).

When we discuss trauma, we are always already discussing a negotiation with the past, the relationship between memory and visuality, remembrance and experience. Arguably, comics have been addressing the many new modes of memory, visualization and shock that have been afforded by modernity since their inception (Smolderen 2009; Bukatman 2012). Contemporary authors, by shifting their attention from genre and entertainment purposes to more complex and varied subject matters, have also found ways of addressing in more complicated ways the very possibilities of representing the impressions of the past, even when brought into crisis by trauma, big and small.

Janet Walker, in her "Traumatic Paradox" essay, discusses a famous example in which an Auschwitz survivor, a woman, misremembers the number of chimneys being blown up

(four, instead of the actual one). Originally, this is something discussed by Felman and Laub (1992), and which Walker expands. This episode is not understood as something that undermines the act of witnessing itself, but rather shows how "[m]istaken memories also testify, here to the 'breakage of the frame'" (2006: 108). In the medium of comics, one such example in found in Emmanuel Guibert's *La Guerre d'Alan* (L'Association, 2000-2008). This is an outstanding example of a book that transforms the memories of an Other (Alan Cope, a World War II North-American veteran that was living in France before his death, and who became friends with the comics author) into a self-memory: although the book is created entirely by Guibert (who after Cope's death would go on to create *L'enfance d'Alan*, L'Association 2012), it is not only based on recordings of Cope's memoirs as it is written in the first person.[111] In this book, there is one episode when Alan cannot remember the name of a given philosopher (Vol 1, page 53), and he says so. Two pages later (page 55), Alan remembers it is Bertrand Russel. It would be easy for Emmanuel Guibert to simply place the name before, "correcting" the forgetfulness of old Cope, just as he manipulates the events and memories in order to create the particular text we are reading. But Guibert chooses to "make visible" that very forgetfulness, at the same time that it "breaks" the flowing frame of the narrative, reminding us, the readers, that we are not witnessing the events themselves, but an artful recreation of them, a remembering via specific stylistic and structural ways (in this case, those of comics):

> "the original text, itself vulnerable, addresses us, reveals itself as a participant in a collective life, or life-in-death, one sign of which is tradition or intertextuality" (Hartman 1995: 549).

Hartman, in the same text, exposes this idea in a very clear way as he shows that when thinking about texts, literary in his case, but extendable to other artistic creations, it "is hard to think of the real (in Lacan's sense) as being consciously experienced" (1995: 539). He adds:

> "This leads toward literary theory, because the disjunction between experiencing (phenomenal or empirical) and understanding (thoughtful naming, in which words replace things, or their images), is what figurative language expresses and explores. The literary

111 *La Guerre d'Alan* was the object of one of the chapter's of my Master's Dissertation on Aesthetics.

> construction of memory is obviously not a literal retrieval but a statement of a different sort. It relates to the negative moment in experience, to what in experience has not been, or cannot be, adequately experienced. That moment is now expressed, or made known, in its negativity; the artistic representation modifies that part of our desire for knowledge (epistemophilia) which is driven by images (scopophilia)" (1995: 540)

Hartman leads us to the deployment of fantasy, when we take in account that

> "trauma can include a rupture of the symbolic order (…) Fantasy has entered to repair a breach. Not so much a breach *of* the symbolic as *between* the symbolic and the individual." (original emphases, 1995: 543)

In *Trauma Culture*, Ann E. Kaplan debates how a traumatic event can be seen as "open, fluid, specific" (Kaplan 2005: 17) and how it can elicit a "narration without narrativity" or how dreams, "[f]ragments, hallucinations, and flashbacks are modes trauma often adopts" (idem: 65), modes which the cultural theorist deems as belonging to *visuality* (idem:69).

Whereas Kaplan is dealing with documentary film, my work is focusing on a completely different medium, one that is nonetheless able to express, expound, negotiate with and respond to "visually mediated trauma." That mediation opens up the possibility of finding texts that, while associating themselves to real, contextualised, pervasive traumatogenic situations, opt for either fictive solutions or modes of expression that involve a high degree of fantasy. In any case, they do not allow for simple closure in relationship to the "small traumas" that are addressed.

> "I conclude that art that takes trauma for its topic but does not allow the spectator so easily to 'survive' the protagonist's death or wound [she is referring to Maya Deren's *Meshes Afternoon* and Tracey Moffatt's *Night Cries*, and to a sentence by Freud], refuses the safe closure that melodrama [such as Hitchcock's *Spellbound* or Kevin Costner's *Dances With Wolves*, also studied by Kaplan] perhaps vainly seeks. Art that leaves the wound open pulls the spectator into its sphere in ways other kinds of art may not." (Kaplan 2005: 135)

Instead of viewing fantastical irruptions in the texture of reality, of autobiography or of responses to societal strife as a weakness of the reality principle, they must be understood as an intrinsic part of them all, a necessary structure that makes the very discourse possible. Even if that structure seems not to be as solid as it "should," given that "…by incorporating self-reflexive devices to call attention to the friability of the scaffolding for audiovisual historiography" (Walker 2005: 19), these texts become quite

fragmentary. Marco Mendes's *Diário Rasgado* makes this quite visible both at a macro-level (the permutations between 4-panel strips) and at micro-level (all the materiality traces that were mentioned). Many of the works of the last chapter explore also fragmentation either at a level of narration or by the very material forms they seek (the editorial processes, the existence as separate folios and post-it notes, and so on).

Slavoj Žižek, in *The Plague of Fantasies*, addressing his Lacanian take on the relationship of desire and its impossible fulfilment, lest it (desire itself) would dissolve completely, writes:

> "There is no connection whatsoever between the (phantamastic) real of the subject and his symbolic identity: the two are thoroughly *incommensurable*.) Fantasy thus creates a multitude of 'subject positions' among which the (observing, fantasizing) subject is free to float, to shift his identification from one to another" (2008: 7, nt 5).

Is this what allows for, within a medium such as comics, the authors to represent themselves, their avatars or their characters, in particular approaches (such as that of "trauma comics") as permanently shifting bodies? Carneiro's characters renditions and drawing styles changed over the years but it may not be explainable solely thanks to a certain "interval evolution" of the artist's skills. The evasion of self-representation in a slightly autobiographical project such as Feitor's *Uma perna maior que a outra* cannot be seen as a simple way of disguising oneself. The negation of the centrality of a protagonist in Jucifer's or Daniel Seabra Lopes's work and the oblique manner with which Pepederlrey, Amanda Baeza and Bruno Borges address actual events are not simple fantasy or genre choices. They remain open to the "multitude of 'subject positions'" that Žižek refers to.

Let's not forget how the opening of *Diário Rasgado* presents multiple "body-pieces" that, diegetically, belong to the several men living in Marco's apartment, but can also be interpreted as a concept of one single, divided, broken man. The last strip that closes Mendes's book is called "Férias" ("Vacations" [Image 43]). We see (probably) those same men sharing a room, sleeping. The last panels show a couple of joggers running past outside, contrasting with the sleepers, one of whom says "today I won't get drunk." Note the beer cans and bottles on the window sill, both inside and out. Contrarily to the image of the healthy, proactive, entrepreneur youth outside, Marco's friends seem to pay the price for unreasonable nights that lead only to these scenes. The words spoken by the unidentified friend seem hollow. They are quite probably empty promises, crushed already

like the beer cans around them, acting thus a symbol of inaction and ineptitude facing the overwhelming odds of an indifferent society. Why is there no action?

Then again, perhaps the action is the very idle threat that has just been spoken out loud. It acts as a sign of acknowledgement of the reality that has just dissipated. That in fact, constituted itself as it dissipates. Žižek continues:

> "Consequently, the paradox to be fully accepted is that when a certain historical moment is (mis)perceived as the moment of loss of some quality, upon closer inspection it becomes clear that the lost quality emerged only at this very moment of its alleged loss… This coincidence of emergence and loss, of course, designates the fundamental of the Lacanian *objet petit a* which emerges as being lost narrativization occludes this paradox by describing the process in which the object is first given and then gets lost." (2008: 14-15)

The acknowledgement of a loss is therefore a signalling, and even a celebration, of the very thing that is perceived as lost at that precise moment. It has less to do with an event proper than with the its recognition, which is created and emerges within the very act of its expression (in comics, the scene itself). "Scale" here is of no importance, that is to say, the nature of this signalling comes across in either situations that may deemed as overwhelming traumas or situations that, if seemingly banal, trivial, small, are nonetheless treated through the same mechanisms. One such example occurs when in *Diário Rasgado*, the character Marco is leaving Barcelona, and Lígia verbally ends their relationship, just before he takes the bus to the airport back to Porto. What word does the author Mendes use as for the title of this strip? "Trauma." Perhaps to the point of abuse, I will refer again to Žižek; he says:

> "Here we can see clearly how fantasy is on the side of reality, how it sustains the subject's 'sense of reality': when the phantasmatic frame disintegrates, the subject undergoes a 'loss of reality' and starts to perceive reality as an 'irreal' nightmarish universe with no firm ontological foundation; this nightmarish universe is not 'pure fantasy' but, on the contrary, *that which remains of reality after reality is deprived of its support in fantasy.*" (2008: 84)

This "side of reality," this "nightmarish universe," is the material text itself. The very shape of these texts I have brought together in this work are witness to the changes operated by small traumas – the blog strips that are re-ordered, the post-it notes that act as a playful, re-combinable unity, the autobiography that uses pictures in order to create a nightmarish vision, the short story that is then edited interspersed with other people's work, the books that use collage and documents to complicate a unitary account. As Jill

Benett states, "trauma is not something immaterial that happens to the individual, leaving the world unchanged - rather, it has a palpable extension within the world" (2005: 49).

By giving such material form to experiences of small traumas, the authors are not attempting to elicit sympathy from their readers, nor are they trying to "compete" with reports of other type of situation. They are however, and allow me to quote this yet again, "giving trauma extension in space or lived *place*, [and that leads to] it invites an awareness of different modes of inhabitation" (Bennett 2005: 12).

As non-melodramatic and unrealistic takes, sometimes even non-narrative or micro-narrative examples of comics, these small trauma comics fulfil the role of what Jill Bennett calls "nonaffirmative forms of art," which "counter [a] kind of moralism and middlebrow humanism" (idem: 16) that is often expected from accounts of trauma and its (supposed) overcoming. Accounts that, dangerously, court "the tendency to overidentify with the victims of trauma" (idem: 21).

The political victory, as it were, of these texts, is the agency they demand from their readers in understanding – either in order to find common ground or, quite the contrary, to deny any bond – the possible empathy. No identification is sought for, but rather an acknowledgement of the other's situation. Paying attention to what may seem "small" problems underlines the very importance of not judging its scale, but rather be prepared to listen to such stories.

Other examples could have come to the fore. I am certain that a more precise or concentrated focus on autobiography or auto-fiction could have wielded more concrete results, instead of its dispersed attention. The consideration of other authors, such as Francisco Sousa Lobo, António Pedro Pinto Ribeiro, or a comparison with international artists that create similar, comparable projects, from Justin Green to Chester Brown, from Gabrielle Bell to Mattt Konture, could perhaps sharpen these ideas. What differences can we find in comics that address trauma (big or small) within a realistic/naturalistic framework and those that allow for the intercalation with dreams and fantasies? What is the difference between comics that follow the now almost canonical principles of the "literary graphic novels" that warrant almost immediate critical attention and all those other forms that fall beyond the purview of such critical radars, such as blog or tumblr comics, or small press material? If this is slightly hyperbolic, the truth is that most surveys would reveal a clearly superior attention to "book comics" than anything else.

On the other hand, a focus on how the history of traumatic relationships can be rethought, rekindled, and even retaught could also provide us with a stimulating inquiry. Belgian and French comics are re-addressing their colonial past in innovative and engaging manners (McKinney 2011 and 2013), by not only looking at the past but by asking questions about how we, in the present, relate ourselves to that past. Portugal, with its own colonial past, has only recently begun to ask these questions within the medium of comics, as well as with other moments of the past, such as the 1828-1834 Civil War, the struggles of the Fall of the Monarchy and the emergence of the Republic in 1910, the 1926 military coup and the long dictatorship that lasted until 1974. Many of the ghosts of this past, including those that have survived in small things until today, are yet to be addressed by both society at large and comics in particular.

Finally, a consideration of the ongoing struggles for alterglobalisation policies, as expressed in comics (say, the *World War III* anthology, or the political-economic essays by Pasquale Squarzoni, or the dramatic shifts in subject matter in contemporary Brazilian comics by authors such as Pedro Franz, Diego Gerlach and others), could also become a very productive field. By addressing the pervasive traumatic consequences brought about by neoliberalism all over the world, by providing counter-discourses to systemic disadvantages, social inequalities, a pervasive rape culture, victim-blaming and other sources of discrimination and prejudice, comics can be a powerful tool for the disfranchised and the creation of empathy bridges.

We hope that the combination of these areas are not seen as a feebleness of the project, but as an attempt to identify the expressive possibilities of what I have called "small traumas" within the medium of comics. Some of the ideas, however, do warrant further research and a stronger theoretical buttressing in order to achieve better clarity, pertinence and applicability. The point, nonetheless, is not to point out the possibility of the ultimate reparation and dissipation of trauma, a probably unattainable goal, but the opening of an acknowledgement of both the traumas and the desire to make it known by the authors, as a proof of their agency and foundation of "modes or recognition," as Hartman called them.

And thinking of the comics medium to do so must not be seen as debasing prospect in any way, as this is as capable a medium as any other to engage with the symbolization of these realities, which, again following Hartman, "in this sense, is not a denial of literal or referential but its uncanny intensification" (Hartman 1995: 547).

References.

Primary sources

AAVV. *Portrait/Lamb Haert.* Porto: A Mula 2005.

AAVV. *Estou careca e a minha cadela vai morrer!* Porto: A Mula 2005.

AAVV. *Hum, hum! Estou a ver...* Porto: A Mula 2005.

AAVV. *Cospe Aqui.* Porto: A Mula 2006.

AAVV. *Grande Prémio.* Porto: A Mula 2007.

AAVV. *Qu'Inferno*. Porto: A Mula 2009.

AAVV. *Buraco* no. 1. Porto: n.p. 2012.

AAVV. *Buraco* no. 2. Porto: n.p. 2012.

AAVV. *Buraco* no. 3. Porto: n.p. 2012.

AAVV. *Buraco* no. 4. Porto: n.p. 2012.

Baeza, Amanda. *Mini kus! n*o 13, *Our Library/Mūsu bibliotēka*. Riga: Biedriba Grafiskie stāsti n.d. [2013]

Baptista, Tiago. *Fábricas, Baldios, Fé e Pedras Atiradas à Lama*. Lisboa: Oficina do Cego/a9)))) 2011.

Baptista, Tiago. "A Ribeira de Carenque." *Gerador* no. 67. Lisboa 2016.

Corradi, Alberto, ed. *Quadradinhos. Sguardi sul Fumetto Portoghese*. Treviso/Lisbon: Associzione Culturale Fumetti in Treviso/Chili Com Carne 2014.

Cotrim, João Paul and Miguel Rocha. *Salazar, Agora na Hora da sua Morte*. Lisbon: Parceria A. M. Pereira 2006.

Farrajota, Marcos, ed. *Futuro Primitivo*. n.p.: Chili Com Carne 2012.

Farrajota, Marcos, ed. *Mesinha de Cabeceira* no. 2, *Inverno*. n.p.: Chili Com Carne 2012.

Feitor, José. *Uma perna maior que a outra*. Lisbon: Imprensa Canalha 2014.

Jucifer. *Post Shit*. Lisbon: Crime Creme n.d. [2008]

Jucifer. *Heavy Metal*. Lisbon: Crime Creme n.d. [2009]

Jucifer. *A mãe de todos os agarrados*. Lisbon: Crime Creme n.d. [2009]

Mendes, Marco. *Tomorrow the Chinese Will Deliver the Pandas*. Porto: Plana 2008.

Mendes, Marco. *Diário Rasgado*. Porto: Mundo Fantasma/Turbina/A mula 2012.

Mendes, Marco. *Zombie*. Porto: Mundo Fantasma/Turbina 2014.

Rocha, Miguel. *As Pombinhas do sr. Leitão*. n.p.: BaleiAzul 1999.

Secondary sources

Alexandre-Bidon, Danièle. "La Bande Dessinée avant la Bande Dessinèe. Narration figurée et procédés d'animation dans les images du Moyen Âge." In *Le Collectionneur des Bandes Dessinées* Hors-série : *Les origines de la bande dessinée*. Paris/Angoulême: L'Association de la Revue Le Collectionneur des Bandes Dessinées/ Centre National de la bande Dessinée et de l'Image 1996; pp. 11-20.

Alferi, Pierre. *Brefs. Discours*. Paris: P.O.L. 2016.

Alphen, Ernst van. *Caught by History. Holocaust Effects in Contemporary Art, Literature, and Theory*. Stanford University Press: Stanford CA 1997.

Alphen, Ernst van. *Art in Mind. How Contemporary Images Shape Thought.* Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press 2005.

Antze, Paul, and Michael Lambek, eds., *Tense Past. Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*. New York, NY/London: Routledge 1996

Araújo, Manuel António Teixeira. *A emancipação da literatura infantil*. Porto: Campo das Letras 2008.

Auerbach, Erich. *Mimésis. La représentation de la realité dans la littérature occidentale*. French translation of *Mimesis. Dargestellte Wirklichkeit in der abendländischen Literatur* (1946) by Cornélius Heim. Paris: Gallimard 1968.

Baer, Ulrich, *Spectral Evidence. The Photography of Trauma*. Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology 2002.

Baetens, Jan. *Formes et Politiques de la Bande Dessinée*. Leuven: Peeters/Vrin 1998.

Baetens, Jan. "Revealing Traces: A New Theory of Graphic Enunciation." Robin Varnum and Christina T. Gibbons, eds. *The Language of Comics. Word and Image*. Jackson, MI: University Press of Mississipi 2001.

Baetens, Jan. "North and South in Belgian Comics." *European Comic Art*, 1.2 (2008a); pp. 111-122.

Baetens, Jan. "Of Graphic Novels and Minor Cultures: The Fréon Collective." *Yale French Studies* 114, *Writing and the Image Today* (2008b); pp. 95-115.

Baetens, Jan. "Bande dessinée et roman graphique: récits en images ou formes proprement littéraires?" *Esperienze Letterarie* no. 2 (2010); pp. 39-53.

Baetens, Jan. "Abstraction in Comics." *SubStance* 124, vol. 40, no. 1 (2011); pp. 94-113.

Bal, Mieke. *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1991.

Ball, Karyn, ed., *Traumatizing Theory. The Cultural Politics of Affect In and Beyond Psychoanalysis*. New York, NY: Other Press 2007.

Barsht, Konstantin A. "Defining the face: observations on Dostoevskii's creative process." In *Russian Literature, Modernism and the Visual Arts.* Kelly, Catrioma, and Stephen Lovell, eds. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press 2000; pp. 23-57.

Beaty, Bart. *UnPopular Culture. Transforming the European Comic Book in the 1990s*. Toronto/Buffalo/London: University of Toronto Press 2007.

Belting, Hans. *Pour une Anthropologie des Images.* French trans. by Jean Torrent of *Bild-Anthropologie: Entwürfe für Eine Bildwissenschaft.* Paris: Gallimard 2004.

Benjamin, Walter. "The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nicolai Leskov." Engl. transl. by Harry Zohn. *Illuminations*. New York, NY: Schocken Books 1969; pp. 83-109.

Benjamin, Walter. *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin*. Engl. transl. by Manfred R. Jacobson and Evelyn M. Jacobson of *Briefe 1, 1910-1928*, *Briefe 2, 1929-1940* (1978); Gershom Scholem e Theodor W. Adorno, eds. Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press 1994.

Benjamin, Walter. "Goethe's Elective Affinities." Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings, eds. *Selected Writings. Volume 1, 1913-1926.* Cambridge, MA, London, UK: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press 1996; pp. 297-360.

Walter Benjamin. *The Arcades Project*. Engl. transl. by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin of *Das Passagen-Werk*. Cambridge, MA/London: Belknap/Harvard University Press 2002.

Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations. Essays and Reflections.* Hannan Arendt, ed., Engl. transl. by Harry Zohn. Schocken Books: New York, NY 2007 [1st. ed. 1968].

Bennett, Jill. *Empathic Vision. Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 2005.

Berninger, Mark, Jochen Ecke and Gideon Haberkorn, eds. *Comics as a Nexus of Cultures. Essays on the Interplay of Media, Disciplines and International Perspectives*. Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland & Company Inc., Publishers 2010.

Bezanson, Kate and Meg Luxton, eds., *Social Reproduction: Feminist Political Economy Challenges Neo-Liberalism*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press 2006.

Bhattacharya, Tithi. "What is social reproduction theory?." *SocialistWorker.org*; URL: http://socialistworker.org/2013/09/10/what-is-social-reproduction-theory (last accessed April the 10th 2014).

Blanchet, Evariste. "*Les revoltes ratees* [sic] de Guido Buzzelli." *Bananas:* n.p. 2003; pp. 44-45.

Blanchot, Maurice. *The Writing of the Disaster*. Engl. transl. by Ann Smock of *L'Écriture du désastre* [1980]. Lincoln/London: University of Nebraska Press 1986.

Boléo, João Paulo Paiva e Carlos Bandeiras Pinheiro. *A banda desenhada portuguesa 1914 – 1945*. Lisbon: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian 1997.

Boléo, João Paulo Paiva e Carlos Bandeiras Pinheiro. *A banda desenhada portuguesa: anos 40 - anos 80*. Lisbon: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian 2000.

Borghi, Maurizio. ""The Public Use of Reason' A Philosophical Understanding of Knowledge Sharing." *The International Journal of the Humanities*, vol. 3, 2005-2006; pp. 179-186.

Breithaupt, Fritz. "The Invention of Trauma in German Romanticism." *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 32, no. 1 (2005); pp. 77-101.

Brown, Laura S. "Not Outside the Range: One Feminist Perspective on Psychic Trauma." Caruth, Cathy, *Trauma. Explorations in Memory*. Baltimore/London: The Johns Hopkins University Press 1995; pp. 100-112.

Bukatman, Scott. *The Poetics of Slumberland: Animated Spirits and the Animating Spirit*. Berkeley /Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press 2012.

Butler, Judith. "Gender is Burning. Questions of Appropriation and Subversion." *Bodies That Matter. On the Discursive Limits of Sex*. New York, NY/London: Routledge 1993.

Cabral, João de Pina. "A difusão do limiar: margens, hegemonias e contradições." *Análise Social*, Vol. Xxxiv (153) (2000); pp-. 865-892.

Capart, Philippe, dir. *La Crypte Tonique* no. 12, *Les Patrons de la bande dessinée*. Bruxelles: La Crypte Tonique 2015.

Carrier, David. *The Aesthetics of Comics*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press 2000.

Carroll, Noël. "The Specificity of Media." *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, vol. 19, no 4. Winter 1984; pp. 5-20.

Carroll, Noël. *A Philosophy of Mass Art*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 1998.

Caruth, Cathy. "Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the Possibility of History." *Yale French Studies,* Vol. 79. *Literature and the Ethical Question* (1991); pp. 181-192.

Caruth, Cathy, ed. *Trauma. Explorations in Memory*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press 1995.

Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience. Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Baltimore/London: The Johns Hopkins University Press 1996.

Cerezales, Diego Palacios. A review of "Vítimas de Salazar." *Análise Social*. Vol. XLII, no. 4. 2007: pp. 1128-1135.

Chaney, Michael A., ed. *Graphic Subjects. Critical Essays on Autobiography and Graphic Novels*. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press 2011.

Chatman, Seymour. *Coming to Terms. The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1990.

Chavanne, Renaud. "Le Complexe polonais, 1re partie." *Critix* .º 7 (Fall 1998); pp. 61-64.

Chavanne, Renaud. *Composition de la bande dessinée*. Montrouge: PLG Éditeur 2010.

Cheah, Pheng. "Crises of Money." *Positions* 16: 1. 2008; pp. 189-219.

Chute, Hillary. *Graphic Women. Life Narrative & Contemporary Comics*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press 2010.

Chute, Hillary. *Disaster Drawn. Visual Witness, Comics, and Documentary Form*. Cambridge, MA/ London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press 2016.

Clewell, Tammy. "Mourning Beyond Melancholia: Freud's Psychoanalysis of Loss." *Journal of the American Psychoanalytical Association* no. 52 (1), Winter 2004; pp. 43-67.

Confino, Alon. "Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method." *American Historical Review*, Vol. 102, # 5, AHR: Bloomington, IN Dec 1997; pp. 1386-1403.

Cotrim, João Paulo, ed. *Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro, Fotobiografia.* Lisboa: Assírio & Alvim 2005.

Cohn, Neil. "The Limits of Time and Transitions: Challenges to Theories of Sequential Image Composition." *Studies in Comics*. Vol. 1, no. 1. Intellect: 2010; pp. 127-147.

Cohn, Neil. *The Visual Language of Comics. Introduction to the Structure and Cognition of Sequential Images*. London/New York, NY: Bloomsbury 2013.

Costa, Sara Figueiredo. [Untitled text]. In Moura, Pedro, ed., *Tinta nos Nervos. Banda Desenhada Portuguesa*. Lisboa: Museu Colecção Berardo 2011; pp. 41-52.

Cour, Erin La. "Representation of Truth and Trauma in Personal Narrative: The In-Sight of Graphic Novels." *Frame. Tijdschrift voor Litteratuurwetenschap*, "Graphic Novel." 23.1. May 2010; pp. 41-55.

Crane, Susan. "Writing the Individual Back into Collective Memory." *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 102, no. 5 (Dec 1997); pp. 1372-1385.

Craps, Stef. *Postcolonial Witnessing. Trauma Out of Bounds.* Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan 2013.

Crépin, Thierry and Thierry Groensteen. *"On tue à chaque page." La loi de 1949 sur les publications destinées à la jeunesse*. Paris: Éditions du Temps-Musée de la bande dessinée 1999.

Cunha, Luís. "A imagem do negro na b.d. do Estado Novo: algumas propostas exploratórias." *Cadernos do Noroeste*, vol. 8 (1) (1995); pp. 89-112.

Cunha, Luís and Rosa Cabecinhas. "A estética e o sentido: modos de representar o negro na banda desenhada contemporânea." In Silva, Manuel Carlos, org., *Nação e Estado. Entre o Global e o Local*. Porto: Edições Afrontamento 2006; pp. 73-91.

Cvetkovich, Anne. "Drawing the Archive in Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*." *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly*, vol. 36, no. 1 & 2 (Spring & Summer 2008); pp. 111-128.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *Kafka, Para uma literatura menor*. Port. trans. by Rafael Godinho, of *Kafka, Pour Une Littèrature Mineur* (Éditions de Minuit 1975). Lisbon: Assírio & Alvim 2003.

Deus, António Dias de, e Leonardo De Sá. *Os Comics em Portugal. Uma História da Banda Desenhada*. Lisboa: Edições Cotovia e Bedeteca de Lisboa 1997.

D'Haen, Theo. "Why World Literature Now?" *University of Bucharest Review. A Journal of Literary and Cultural Studies*, no. 01: 2011; pp. 57-64.

D'Haen, Theo. "Minor Literatures and Major Histories." *A World History of Literature*, Theo D'Haen, ed. Brussels: Koninklijke Vlaamse Akademie van België voor Wetenschappen en Kunsten 2012.
D'Haen, Theo. "Major Languages, Minor Literatures, Multiple Legacies" (2013) URL: https://lirias.kuleuven.be/handle/123456789/411262. [last accessed April 2015].

Didi-Huberman, Georges. *L'Image Survivante. Histoire de l'Art et Temps de Fantômes selon Aby Warburg*. Paris: Éditions de Minuit 2002.

Didi-Huberman, Georges. *L'Image Ouverte. Motifs de l'incarnation dans les arts visuels.* Paris: Gallimard 2007.

Didi-Huberman, Georges. *L'Œil de l'histoire.* Tome 4*: Peuples exposés, peuples figurants.* Paris: Minuit 2012.

Dubois, Jacques. *L'instituition de la littérature*. Bruxelles: Éditions labour 2005 [1st. ed. 1975].

Duncombe, Stephen. *Notes from the Underground. Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture.* London: Verso 1997.
Eagleton, Terry, *The Function of Criticism*. London/New York, NY: Verso Books 2005 [1st ed. 1985].

Eakin, Paul John. "What Are We Reading When We Read Autobiography?." *Narrative,* Vol. 12, no. 2 (May 2004); pp. 121-132.

Eco, Umberto. *The Limits of Interpretation*. Blomington, IN: Indiana University Press 1994.

Edkins, Jenny. "Time, Personhood, Politics." In Beulens, Gert, Sam Durrant and Robert Eaglestone, eds.. *The Future of Trauma Theory. Contemporary Literary and Cultural Criticism*. New York, NY/London: Routledge 2014; pp. 127-139.

Elsaesser, Thomas. "Postmodernism as mourning work." *Screen* 42:2 (Summer 2001); pp. 193-201.

Elsaesser, Thomas, and Malte Hagener. *Film Theory. An introduction through the Senses*. New York, NY/London: Routledge 2010.

Fehrle, Johannes. Review of Martin Schüwer's *Wie Comics erzählen. Grundriss einer intermedialen Erzähltheorie der grafischen Literatur. Kritikon Litterarum* 37 (2010); pp. 290-298.

Fehrle, Johannes. "Unnatural Worlds and Unnatural Narration in Comics?." In Alber, Jan, and Rüdiger Heinze, *Unnatural narratives - Unnatural Narratology*. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter 2011; pp. 210-245.

Felman, Shoshana, "Benjamin's Silence," in *Critical Inquiry* Vol. 25, no. 2, *"Angelus Novus": Perspectives on Walter Benjamin* (Winter 1999); pp. 201-234.

Felman, Shoshana and Dori Laub. *Testimony. Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History*. New York, NY/London: Routledge 1992.

Ferro, João Pedro. *História da banda desenhada infantil portuguesa: das origens até ao* ABCzinho. Presença: Lisbon 1987.

Feuchtwang, Stephan. "Loss. Transmissions, recognitions, authorisations." In *Regimes of Memory*. Susannah Radstone and Katharine Hodgkin, eds. New York, NY/London: Routledge 2003; pp. 76-89.

Friedlander, Saul. "Trauma, Transference and 'Working through' in Writing the History of the Shoah." *History and Memory*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Spring-Summer 1992); pp. 39-59.

Forter, Greg. "Freud, Faulkner, Caruth. Trauma and the Politics of Literary Form." *Narrative* Vol. 15, no. 3 (October 2007); pp. 259-285.

França, José Augusto. *Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro.* Lisbon: Bertand 1981.

Frey, Hugo. "History and memory in Franco-Belgian *Bande Dessinée* (BD)." *Rethinking History*, Vol. 6, no. 3 (Winter 2002); pp. 293-304.

Gabillet, Jean-Paul. *Des comics et des hommes. Histoire culturelle des comic-books aux États-Unis.* Nantes: Éditions du Temps 2005.

Gomes, Mário and Peuckert, Jan. "Memento Mori: A Portuguese Style of Melancholy." In Berninger, Mark and Jochen Ecke, Gideon Haberkorn, eds., *Comics as a Nexus of*

Cultures. Essays on the interplay of media, disciplines and international perspectives. Jefferson, NC/London: McFarland 2010; pp. 116-126.

Giglioli, Daniele. *Senza Trauma. Scrittura dell'estremo e narrative del nuovo milenio*. Macerata: Quodlibet 2001.

Gil, José. *Portugal, Hoje. O medo de existir*. Lisbon: Relógio d'Água 2004.

Gilmore, Leigh. *The Limits of Autobiography. Trauma and Testimony.* Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press 2001.

Groensteen, Thierry. *Système de la bande dessinée*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France 1999.

Groensteen, Thierry, ed. *Maîtres de la bande dessinée européenne*. Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France 2000.

Groensteen, Thierry. "L'enfance de l'art." *9e Art* no. 8. Angoulême/Paris: CNBDI-L'An 2 2003; pp. 72-83.

Groensteen, Thierry. *Un object culturel non identifié*. Paris: Éditions de l'An 2 2006.

Groensteen, Thierry. *Bande dessinée et narration. Système de la bande dessinée 2*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France 2011.

Groensteen, Thierry. *M. Töpffer invente la bande dessinée*. Brussels: Les Impressions Nouvelles: 2014a.

Groensteen, Thierry. "L'hybridation graphique ou le patchwork des styles." In Gerbier, Laurent, dir., *Hybridations. Les rencontres entre du texte e de l'image*. Tours: Presses Universitaires François-Rabelais 2014b; pp. 167-175.

Groensteen, Thierry and Benoît Peeters. *Töpffer. L'Invention de la bande dessinée*. Paris: Hermann 1994.

Grove, Laurent. "Autobiography in Early Bande Dessinée." *Bélphegor* Vol. 4, no. 1. (November 2004). URL: https://dalspace.library.dal.ca/handle/10222/47694 [last access 2013]

Hall, Stuart. "Whose heritage? Un-settling 'The Heritage'. Re-imagining the Post-nation." *Third Text*, Vol. 13 , no. 49 (1999); pp. 3-13.

Harding, Jennifer, Pribram, E. Deidre, eds. *Emotions. A Cultural Studies Reader.* New York, NY/London: Routledge 2009.

Hartman, Geoffrey H. "On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies." *New Literary History* Vol. 26, No. 3 (Summer, 1995), pp. 537-563.

Harvey, David C.. "Heritage Pasts and Heritage Presents: temporality, meaning and the scope of heritage studies." In *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, vol. 7, no. 4 (2001); pp. 319-338.

Hatfield, Charles. *Alternative Comics. An Emerging Literature*. Jackson, MS: University press of Mississippi 2005.

Heesen, Anke te. "News, Paper, Scissors: Clippings in the Sciences and Arts Around 1920." In Daston, Lorraine, ed., *Things That Talk. Object lessons from Art and Science*. New York, NY: Zone Books 2004; pp. 297-327.

Heer, Jeet and Kent Worcester, eds. *A Comic Studies Reader*. Jackson, MI: University Press of Mississippi 2009.

Highmore, Ben. "Bitter After Taste. Affect, Food, and Social Aesthetics." Gregg, Melissa, and Gregory J. Seigworth, eds., *The Affect Theory Reader*. Durham/London: Duke University Press 2010; pgs. 118-137.

Hirsch, Marianne. "Family Pictures: *Maus*, Mourning, and Post-Memory." *Discourse* Vol. 15, No. 2, Special Issue: *The Emotions, Gender, and the Politics of Subjectivity* (Winter 1992-93), pp. 3-29.

Hirsch, Marianne. "Editor's Column: Collateral Damage." *PMLA* vol. 119. 5. October 2004; pp. 1209-1215.

Hirsch, Marianne. "Mourning and Postmemory." In Chaney, Michael A., ed. *Graphic Subjects. Critical Essays on Autobiography and Graphic Novels*. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press 2011; pp. 17-44.

Hirsch, Marianne. URL: http://www.postmemory.net/ [last access, March 9th 2013].

Huard, Pierre. "Question de méthode... 40 années de recherches sur la bande dessinée." *Critix*, nos. 8-10. Argenteuil: Bananas BD; pp. 1998-99.

Isabelinho, Domingos. "Comic's Expanded Field." In *The Crib Sheet* (2008). URL: http://thecribsheet-isabelinho.blogspot.pt/2008/10/comics-expanded-field.html [last access, February 2016]

Isabelinho, Domingos. "Para Além de Extraterrestres Mutantes e Heróis." In Moura, Pedro, ed., *Tinta nos Nervos. Banda Desenhada Portuguesa*. Lisbon: Museu Colecção Berardo 2011; pp. 73-83.

Kaplan, Ann E. *Trauma Culture. The Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature*. New Brunswick, NJ/London: Rutgers University Press 2005.

Kardiner, Abram. *The Traumatic Neuroses of War*. Washington, DC: Committee on Problems of Neurotic Behavior Division of Anthropology and Psychology National Research Council 1941.

Klinkenberg, Jean-Marie, and Benoît Denis. *La littérature belge. Précis d'histoire sociale*. Brussels: Espace Nord 2005.

Krauss, Rosalind. "Sculpture in the Expanded Field." *October*, Vol. 8. (Spring, 1979); pp. 30-44.

Kukkonen, Karin. "Popular Cultural Memory. Comics, Communities and Context Knowledge." *Nordicom Review* no. 29 (2008) 2, pp. 261-273.

Kukkonen, Karin. *Contemporary Comics Storytelling*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press 2013.

Kunzle, David. *History of the Comic Strip. Volume I: The Early Comic Strip. Narrative Strips and Pictures Stories in the European Broadsheet from c. 1450 to 1825*. Berkeley, LA/London: University of California Press 1973.

Kunzle, David. *History of the Comic Strip. Volume II: The Nineteenth Century*. Berkeley, LA/London: University of California Press 1990.

Kunzle, David. *Father of the Comic Strip. Rodolphe Töpffer*. Jackson, MI: University Press of Mississippi 2007.

Labio, Catherine. "What's in a Name?: The Academic Study of Comics and the 'Graphic Novel'." *Cinema Journal* vol. 50, no. 3 (Spring 2011); pp. 123-126.

LaCapra, Dominick. *History and Memory After Auschwitz*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press 1998.

LaCapra, Dominick. *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press 2001.

Lefèvre, Pascal and Ch. Dierick, eds. *Forging a New Medium. The Comic Strip in the Nineteenth Century*. Brussels: VUB University Press, 1998.

Lejeune, Philippe. *Le pacte autobiographie*. Paris: Seuil 1975.

Lejeune, Philippe. Je est un autre. L'Autobiographie, de la littérature aux médias. Paris: Seuil 1980.

Lesage, Sylvain. "La bande dessinée en son miroir. Images et usages de l'album dans la bande dessinée française," in *Mémoires du livre / Studies in Book Culture*, volume 2, numéro 2, printemps 2011. URL: http://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1001764ar [last access, March 2016].

Lesage, Sylvain. "Mutation des supports, mutation des publics. La bande dessinée de la presse au livre," in *Belphégor. Littératures popularies et culture médiatique.* 13-1 *Distinctions That Matter/Fictions Économiques* (2015) URL: http://belphegor.revues.org/628. DOI: 10.4000/belphegor.628 [last access, November 2016].

Leventhal, Robert S. "Art Spiegelman's *Maus*: Working-Through The Trauma of the Holocaust," 1995. URL: http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/holocaust/spiegelman.html [last access, March 19th 2013].

Levinson, Jerrold. "Hybrid Art Forms." *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, vol. 18-4 (Winter 1984); pp. 5-13.

Leys, Ruth. "Traumatic Cures: Shell Shock, Janet, and the Question of Memory." In Antze, Paul, and Michael Lambek, eds., *Tense Past. Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*. New York, NY/London: Routledge 1996; pp. 103-145.

Leys, Ruth. *Trauma. A Genealogy*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press 2000.

Lobo, Francisco Sousa. "Manta Banter – the openings of Portugal in the aftermath of the 1974 revolution." Presentation at The Carnation Revolution between African Anti-colonialism and European Rebellion, at the School of Arts of the University of London, May 22nd and 23rd 2014.

Lopes, Silvina Rodriges. "Portugal sem destino." *Como se faz um povo. Ensaios em História Contemporânea de Portugal*. José Neves, coord. Lisbon: Tinta-da-China 2010; pp. 227-239.

Lourenço, Eduardo, *Heterodoxia*. Assírio & Alvim: Lisbon 1987.

Luebke, Peter C. and Rachel DiNitto. "Maruo Suehiro's *Planet of the Jap*. Revanchist fantasy or war critique?." In Rosenbaum, Romanc, ed. *Manga and the Representation of Japanese History*. New York, NY/London: Routledge 2013; pp. 81-101.

Maigret, Éric. "La reconnaissance en demi-teinte de la bande dessinée". *Réseaux* Vol. 12, no. 67 (1994); pp. 113-140.

Maigret, Éric. "Théorie des bandes débordées." In Maigret, Éric, and Stefanelli, Matteo (eds.), *La bande dessinée: une médiaculture*. Armand Colin/Ina Éditions: Paris 2012; pp. 50-70.

Mannheim, Karl. *Ideology and Utopia. Collected Works of Karl Mannheim*. Vol 1. New York, NY/London: Routledge 1997.

Marks, Laura U. *Touch. Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media*. Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press 2002.

Mao, Catherine. "L'artiste de bande dessinée et son miroir: l'autoportrait détourné." *Comicalités*. (September 2013). URL: http://comicalites.revues.org/1702. [last access, April the 5th 2014].

Matos, Álvaro Costa de. "Política e BD na I República." Communication at the 1st Conferências de Banda Desenhada em Portugal, 2011.

McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics. The Invisible Art*. Northhampton: Kitchen Sink Press 1993.

McKinney, Mark. "The Algerian War in *Road to America* (Baru, Thèvenet, and Ledran)." In McKinney, M. (ed.), *History and Politics in French-Language Comics and Graphic Novels*. Jackson, MI: University Press of Mississippi 2008; pp. 139-165.

McKinney, Mark. The Colonial Heritage of French Comics. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press 2011.

McKinney, Mark. *Redrawing French Empire in Comics*. Columbus OH: The Ohio State University 2013.

Medina, J., ed. "Deus, pátria, família: ideologia e mentalidade do salazarismo." *História de Portugal dos tempos pré-históricos aos nossos dias*, vol. XII. Alfragide: Ediclube 1993.

Meskin, Aaron. "Comics as Literature?" *British Journal of Aesthetics*, vol 49-3 (2009); pp. 219-239.

Mikkonen, Kai. "Presenting Minds in Graphic Narratives." *Partial Answers* 6/2 (2008); pp. 301-321.

Miller, Ann. *Reading Bande Dessinée. Critical Approaches to French-Language Comic Strip*. Bristol, UK/Chicago, USA: Intellect 2007.

Miller, Ann. "Konsens und Dissens im Bande Dessinée." In Packard, Stephen, org. *Comics and Politik/Comics & Politics*. Berlin: Ch. A. Bachmann Verlag 2012; pp.

Miller, Ann. "Consensus and Dissensus in bande dessinée". Keynote speech at the 3rd Conferências de Banda Desenhada em Portugal, 2013, September the 18th.

Miller, Ann and Bart Beaty, eds. *The French Comics Theory Reader*. Leuven: Leuven University Press 2014.

Miller, J. Hillis. "The Critic as Host." *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (Spring, 1977); pp. 439-447.

Moretti, Franco. "Conjectures on World Literature." *New Left Review* no. 1. (February 2000); pp. 54-68.

Morla, Lucía Miranda. "Lisbonne en deuil, Portugal sans voix ou l'utopie de Salazar." In Alary, Viviane and Benoît Mitaine, *Lignes de front. Bande dessinée et totalitarisme*. Saint-Rémy-de-Provence: L'équinoxe 2012.

Morrison, Grant. *Supergods. What Masked Vigilantes, Miraculous Mutants, and a Sun God from Samallville can Teach Us about Being Human*. New York, NY: Spiegel & Grau 2011.

Moura, Pedro. "Bordalo leitor (e imitador) de Doré." *Jornal da Oficina do Cego* no. 1 (2010): n.p.

Moura, Pedro. "'To Find Places to Draw': Comics' Resistance to Insecurity." *Reconstruction* Vol. 12, No. 3 (2012a). URL: http://reconstruction.eserver.org/Issues/123/Moura.shtml

Moura, Pedro. "*A voz do oud*: Criação de espaços multiculturais e a assunção da voz ao "outro" na banda desenhada francófona contemporânea." *estrema. Revista Interdisciplinar de Humanidades*. (2012b.)

Moura, Pedro. "Ink Ghosts. Visual presence of haunted memories in comics." Presentation at *Traumatic and Haunting Images: Roles, Ethics, and Aesthetics*. Cultural Memory Studies Initiave of the Ghent University (October 2015).

Mowitt, John. "Trauma Envy." In, Bowman and Rochard Stampd, eds., The Truth of Žižek. London/New York, NY: Continuum 2007; p. 117-143.

Murray, Chris. "*Pop*aganda: Superhero Comics and Propaganda in World War Two." In Magnussen, Anne and Hans Christian Christiansen, eds., *Comics and Culture. Analytical and Theoretical Approaches to Comic*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press 2000; pp. 141-155.

Ngai, Sianne. *Ugly Feelings*. Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press 2005.

Nora, Pierre, dir. *Les lieux de mémoire*, tome 1, *La République*. Paris: Gallimard 1984.

Pagano, Ugo. "Cultural diversity, European integration and the walfare state." In Parijs, Philippe Van, ed. *Cultural Diversity Versus Economic Solidarity*. Brussels: De Boeck 2004; pp. 315-330.

Pedler, Martyn. "Suffering and Seriality: Memory, Continuity and Trauma in Monthly Superhero Adventures." URL: http://web.mit.edu/comm-forum/mit5/papers/Pedler_Suffering_and_Seriality.pdf [last accessed March 2012]

Pimentel, Irene Flunser and Luís Farinha. *Vítimas de Salazar. Estado Novo e violência política*. Lisbon: Esfera dos Livros 2007.

Pimentel, Irene Flunser. *A História da Pide*. Lisbon: Temas e Debates 2011.

Pinto, António Costa. "O império do professor: Salazar e a elite ministerial do Estado Novo (1933-1945)." *Análise Social*, vol. xxxv., no 157, 2000; pp. 1-22.

Poletti, Anna. "Auto/Assemblage: Reading the Zine." *Biography* 31.1. 2008; pp. 85-102.

Precup, Mihaela. *Sites of Memory and Trauma in the American Graphic Memoir.* Doctoral dissertation. Under the direction of Prof. Rodica Mihăilă. Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures. University of Bucharest 2010.

Pulda, Molly. "Portrait of a Secret: J.R. Ackerley and Alison Bechdel." In Amihay, Ofra, and Lauren Walsh, eds., *The Future of Text and Image: Collected Essays on Literary and Visual Conjunctures.* Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2012; pp. 15-37.

Pylyser, Charlotte. "The Heirs of Frans Masereel." *Bangarang. Comics from Flanders*. Berchem: Flemish Literature Fund 2013.

Olkowski, Dorothea. "Catastrophe." In Ball, Karyn, ed., *Traumatizing Theory. The Cultural Politics of Affect In and Beyond Psychoanalysis*. New York, NY: Other Press 2007; pg. 41-65

O'Sullivan, Simon. "From Stuttering and Stammering to the Diagram: Towards a Minor Art Practice?." In Bleyen, Mieke, ed., *Minor Photography. Connecting Deleuze and Guattari to Photography Theory*. Leuven: Leuven University Press 2012; pp. 3-16.

Radstone, Susannah, "Reconceiving Binaries: the Limits of Memory," in *History Workshop Journal*, Issue 59, Spring 2005; pp. 134-150.

Radstone, Susannah, "Trauma Theory: Contexts, Politics, Ethics," in *Paragraph*, Vol. 30, no. 1, (March 2007); pp. 9-29.

Radstone, Susannah, "Social Bonds and Psychical Order: Testimonies." *Cultural Values*. Vol 5, no 1 (January 2001); pp. 59-78.

Radstone, Susannah, and Katharine Hodgkin, eds. *Regimes of Memory*. New York, NY/London: Routledge 2003.

Rajagopal, Arvind. "Imperceptible Perceptions in our Technological Modernity." In Chun, Wendy Hui Kyong, and Keenan, Thomas, eds. *New Media/Old Media. A History and Theory Reader*. New York, NY/London: Routledge 2006; pp. 275-285.

Rancière, Jacques. *The Politics of Aesthetics. The Distribution of the Sensible*. Engl. trans. by Gabriel Rockhill of *Le Partage du Sensible* (2000). London/New York, NY: Continuum 2004 (a).

Rancière, Jacques. "Introducing Disagreement." Engl. trans. by Steve Corcoran. *Angelaki. Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, vol. 9 no. 3, December 2004 (b); pp. 3-9.

Rancière, Jacques. *The Emancipated Spectator*. Engl. trans. by Gregory Elliott of *Le spectateur émancipé*. London/Brooklyn, NY: Verso Books 2009.

Rancière, Jacques. *Dissensus. On Politics and Aesthetics*. Engl. trans. and ed. Steven Corcoran. London/New York, NY: Continuum 2010.

Rappaport, Ernet A. "Beyond Traumatic Neurosis. A Psychoanalytic Study of Late Reactions to the Concentration Camp Trauma." *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*. Vol. 49; pp. 719-731 (1968). URL: http://www.ernestrappaport.com/traumatic%20neurosis.htm [last access, 12th November 2016].

Refaie, Elisabeth El. *Autobiographical Comics. Life Writing in Pictures*. Jackson MI: University Press of Mississippi 2013.

Rey, Jean-Michel. "Freud's Writing on Writing," Engl. trans. by G. W. Most and James Hulbert, in Felman, Shoshana, ed., *Literature and Psychoanalysis. The Question of Reading: Otherwise*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press 1982; pp. 301-328.

Ribeiro, Gustavo Lins. "Economic Globalization from Below." *Etnográfica*, vol. X (2). Lisbon: Centro de Estudos de Antopologia Social/ISCTE 2006; pp. 233-249.

Ribeiro, Maria da Conceição. *A polícia política no Estado Novo.* Lisbon: Editorial Estampa 1996.

Richardson, Brian. "Time Is Out of Joint: Narrative Models and the Temporality of the Drama." *Poetics Today*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (1987); pp. 299-309.

Riegl, Aloïs. *El culto moderno a los monumentos*. Spanish transl. by Ana Pérez López of *Der moderne Denkmalkultus. Sein Wesen und seine Entstehung* (1903). Madrid: Visor 1999.

Rocha, Natércia. *Breve história da literatura para crianças em* Portugal. Lisbon: ICALP/Biblioteca Breve 1984.

Rosas, Fernando. *Salazar e o poder. A arte de saber durar*. Lisbon: Tinta-da-China 2012.

Samara, Maria Alice and Tiago Baptista. *Os cartazes na primeira república.* Tinta-da-China: Lisboa 2010.

Santos, Boaventura de Sousa. "Estado e Sociedade na Semiperiferia do Sistema Mundial: o Caso Português." *Análise Social*. No. 87/88/89 (1985); pp. 869-901.

Santos, Boaventura de Sousa. *Portugal. Ensaio contra a auto flagelação*. Coimbra: Almedina 2011.

Schlanger, Judith. *Trop dire ou trop peu. La densité littéraire*. Paris: Hermann 2016.

Schneider, Greice. *What Happens When Nothing Happens. Boredom and Everyday Life in Contemporary Comics*. Leuven: Leuven University Press 2016.

Schwab, Gabriele. *Haunting Legacies. Violent Histories and transgenerational trauma*. NY/Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press 2010.

Silva, Marie Manuelle and Rui Malheiro. "A banda desenhada portuguesa: autores, temas e tendências." *Boletín Galego de Literatura* - "Olladas do Cómic Ibérico," no. 35 (2006); pp. 155-178.

Silverman, Kaja. *The Threshold of the Visible World.* New York, NY/London: Routledge 1996.

Smolderen, Thierry. *Naissances de la bande dessinée. De William Hogarth à Winsor McCay*. Bruxelles: Les Impressions Nouvelles 2009.

Smolderen, Thierry. "L'hybridation graphique, creuset de la bande dessinée." In Gerbier, Laurent, dir., *Hybridations. Les rencontres entre du texte e de l'image*. Tours: Presses Universitaires François-Rabelais 2014; pp. 148-165.

Sousa, Jorge Pais de. *O Fascismo Catedrático de Salazar*. Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra 2011.

Stevens, Maurice. "From the Past Imperfect: Towards a Critical Trauma Theory." *Letters. The Semiannual Newsletter of the Robert Penn Warren centre for the Humanities* vol. 17, no. 2 (Spring 2009); pp. 1-5. URL: http://www.vanderbilt.edu/rpw_centre/Letters/ls09a.htm [last access, May 9th 2014].

Tomlie, Jane. "Introduction," in Tolmie, J., ed. *Drawing From Life. Memory and Subjectivity in Comic Art*. Jackson, MI: University Press of Mississippi 2013; pp. vii-xxiii.

Tal, Kali. *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma*. 3rd revision (1st editon Cambridge University Press: 1996). URL: http://kalital.com/Text/Worlds/index.html [last access, March 2013].

Töpffer, Rodolphe. *The Complete Comic Strips*. Kunzle, David, ed. Jackson, MI: University Press of Mississippi 2007.

Trondheim, Lewis. *Désoeuvré*. Paris: L'Association 2005.

Vann, J. Don. *Victorian Novels in Serial*. The Modern Language Association of American: New York, NY 1985.

Walker, Janet. *Trauma Cinema. Documenting Incest and the Holocaust*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press 2005.

Walker, Janet. "The Traumatic Paradox. Autobiographical documentary and the psychology of memory." In Hodgkin, Katharine, and Susannah Radstone, eds. *Memory, History, Nation. Contested Pasts*. Ew Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers 2006; pp. 104-119.

Warhol, Robyn. "The Space Between: A Narrative Approach to Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*" . *College Literature*, vol. 38., no. 3 (Summer 2011); pp. 1-20.

Raymond, Williams. *The Long Revolution*. Orchard Park, NY/Hertfordshire: Broadview Press 2001 [1st. ed., 1961].

Zink, Rui. *Literatura Gráfica? Banda Desenhada Contemporânea Portuguesa*. Oeiras: Celta 1999.

Zink, Rui. *O Humor de Bolso de José Vilhena*. Oeiras: Celta 2001.

Žižek, Slavoj. *The Plague of Fantasies*. London/New York, NY: Verso 2008.

Zunshine, Lisa. "What to Expect When You Pick Up a Graphic Novel." *SubStance* # 124, vol. 40, no. 1 (2011); pp. 114-134.

A Co-Tutelle dissertation between

FACULDADE DE LETRAS / UNIVERSIDADE DE LISBOA

&

FACULTEIT LETTEREN / KATHOLIEKE UNIVERSITEIT LEUVEN

Small panels for lower ranges.
An Interdisciplinary Approach to
Contemporary Portuguese Comics and Trauma.

Pedro David Vieira de Moura

Advisors

Professor Fernanda Gil Costa (Faculdade de Letras, UL)Professor Jan Baetens (Faculteit Letteren, KUL)

Tese especialmente elaborada para obtenção do grau de Doutor no ramo de Estudos de Literatura e Cultura, na especialidade de Estudos Comparatistas (FLUL)

& Doctoral degree in Literary Studies (KUL)

2017

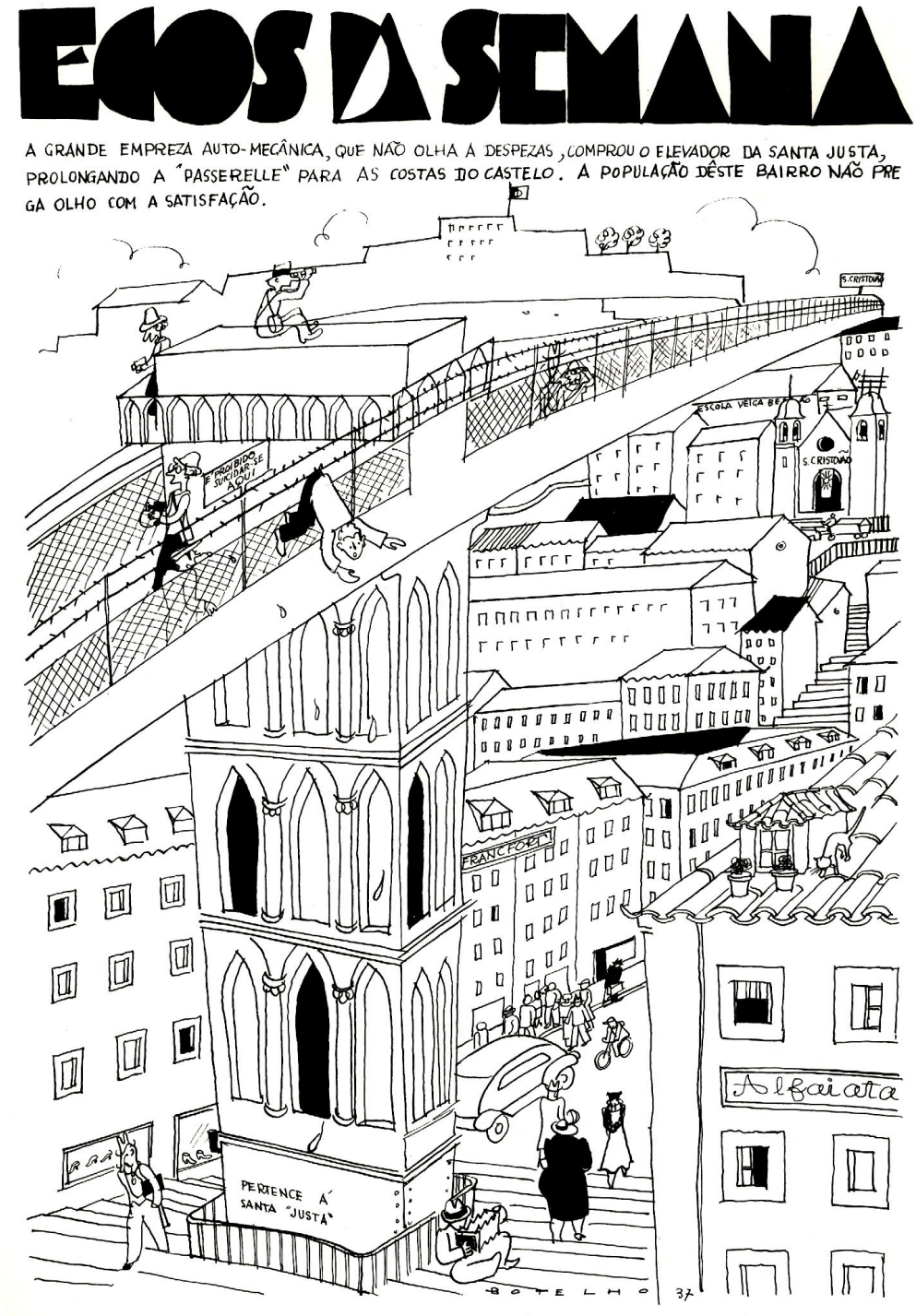

Image 1. Carlos Botelho, "Ecos da semana", *Sempre Fixe* (1937)

Image 2. Augusto Barbosa (text) and Carlos Alberto Santos (drawings), "História Maravilhosa de João dos Mares", *Mundo de Aventuras* (1949)

Image 3. Marco Mendes, *Diário Rasgado* (book edition cover, 2012)

Image 4. Marco Mendes, *Diário Rasgado* (introductory image, 2012)

Image 5. Guido Buzzelli, *Zil Zelub* (1971; Portuguese version 1973)

Image 6. Marco Mendes, "Afrodite", *Diário Rasgado* (2010)

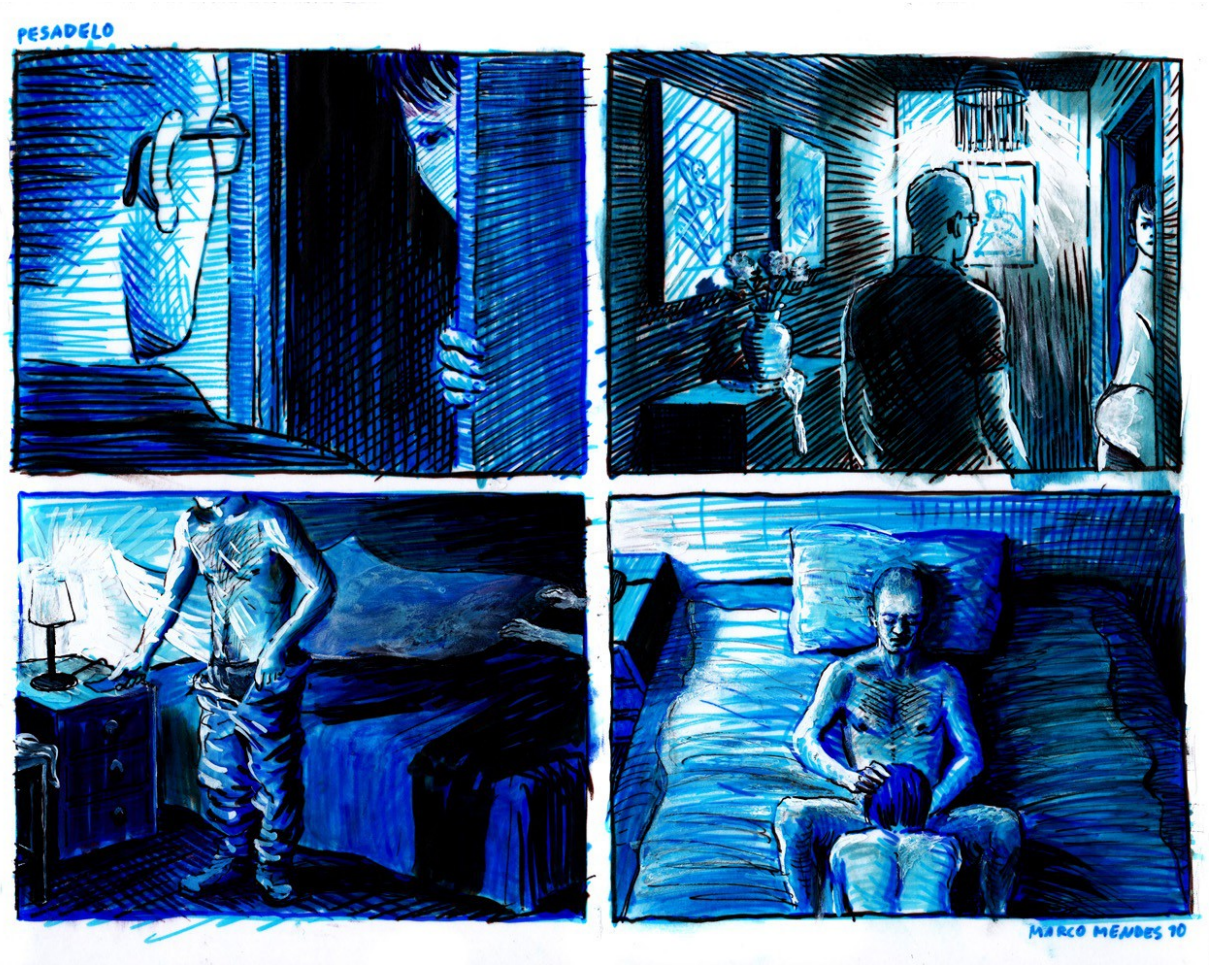

Image 7. Marco Mendes, "Pesadelo", *Diário Rasgado* (2010)

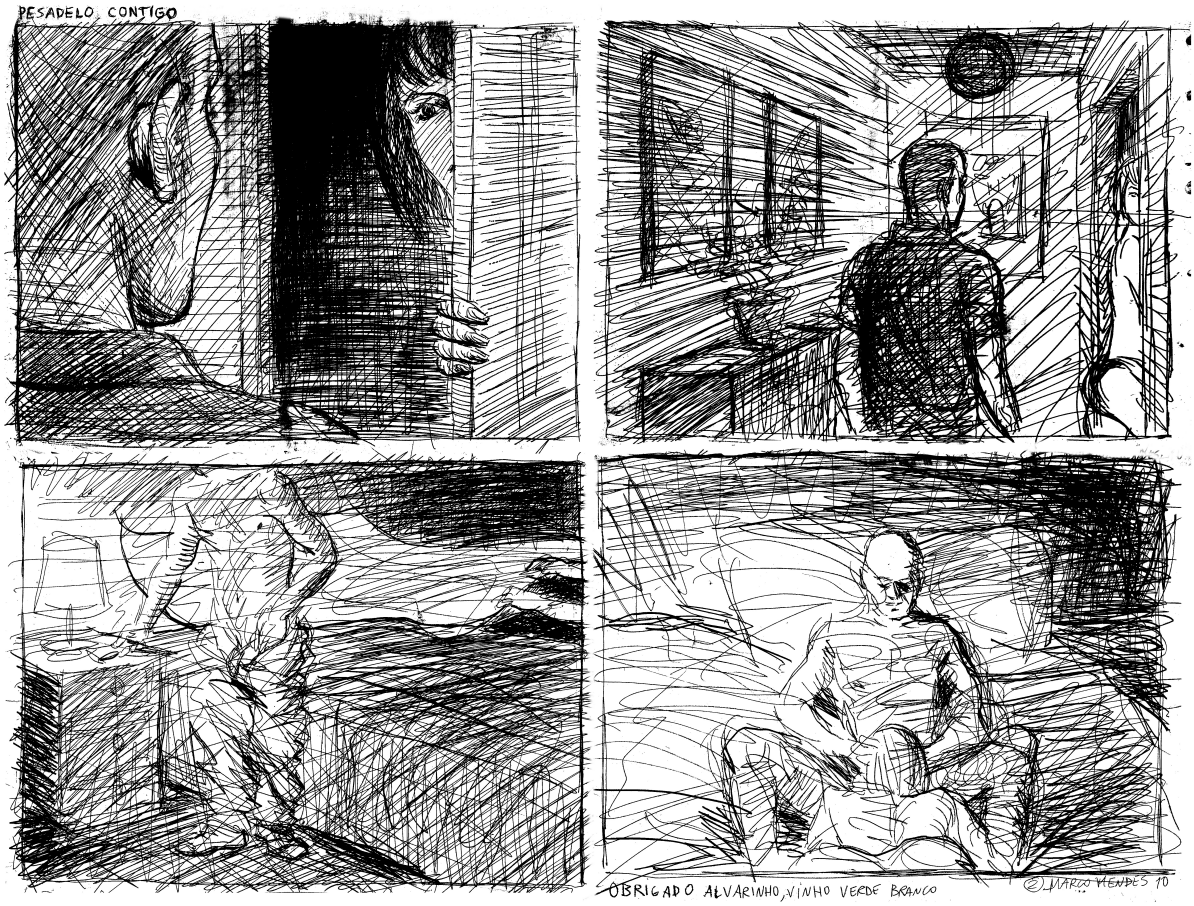

Image 8. Marco Mendes, "Pesadelo contigo" (aborted sketch), *Diário rasgado* (2010)

Image 9. Marco Mendes, "1 de Maio", *Avante* no. 1953 (2011)

Image 10. Francisco de Goya, *3 de Mayo de 1808* (1814)

Image 11. João Abel Manta, *Povo, MFA* poster (ca. 1974)

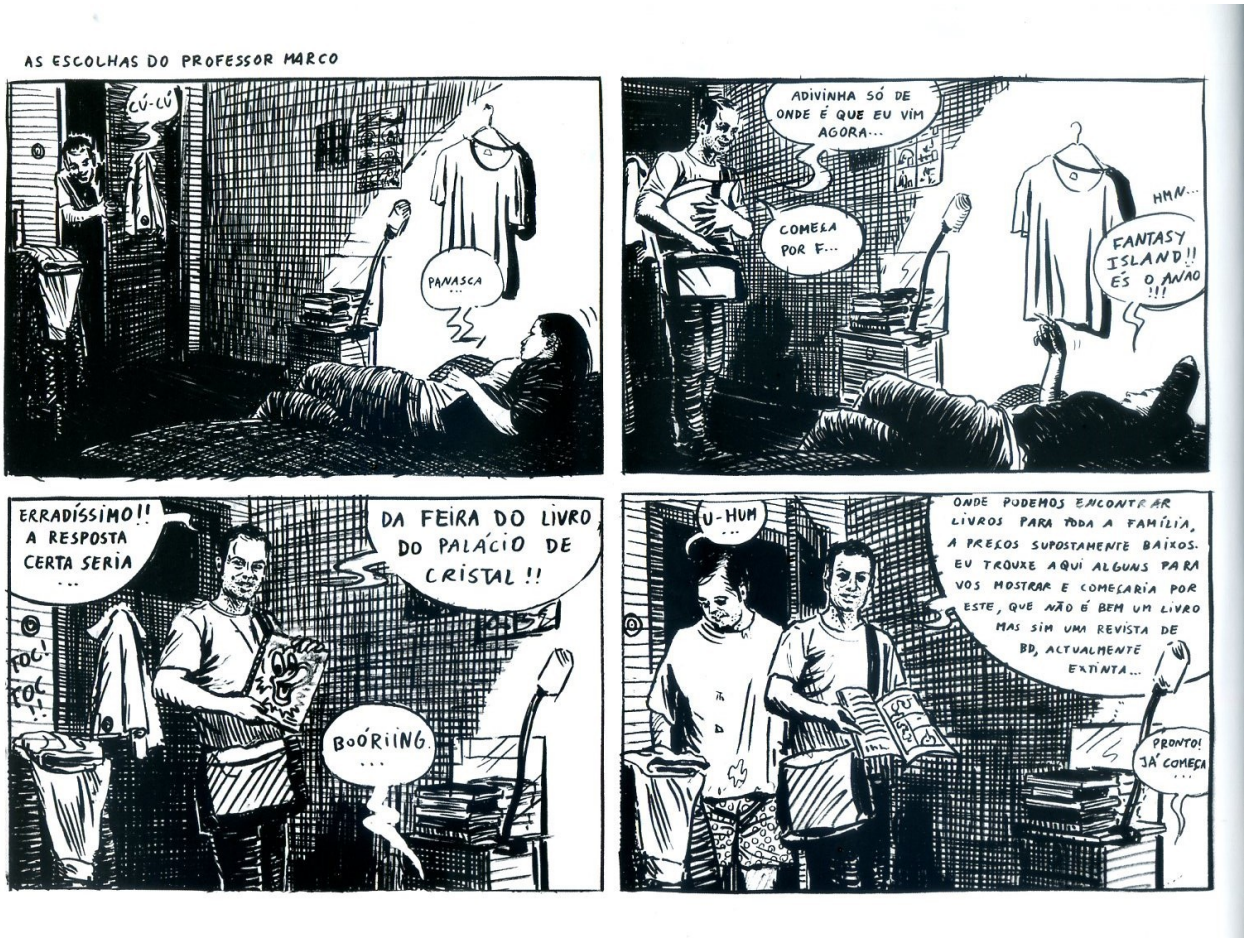

Image 12. Marco Mendes, "As lições do Professor Marco", *Diário rasgado* (2008)

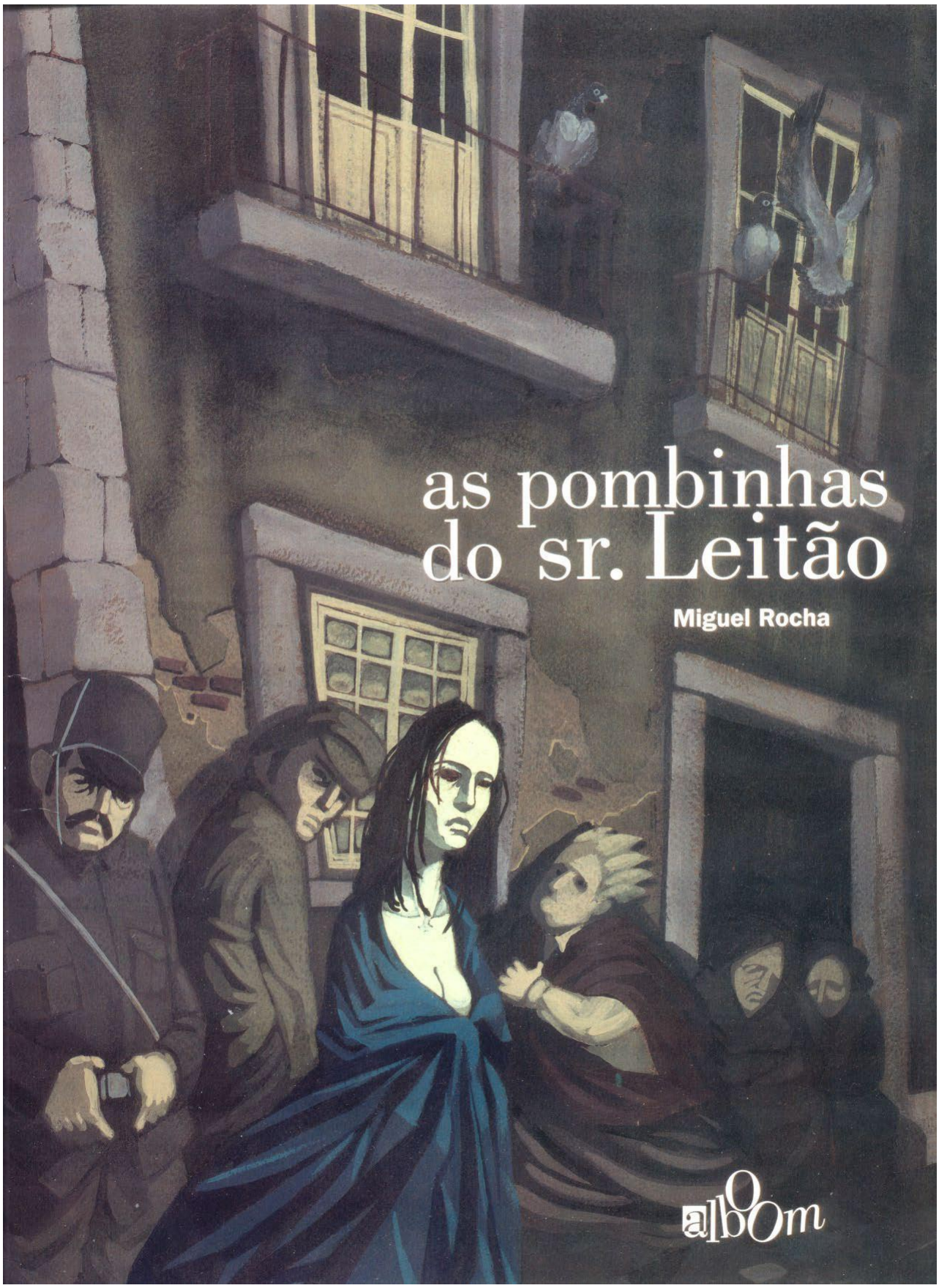

Image 13. Miguel Rocha, *As Pombinhas do Sr. Leitão*, (cover, 1999)

Image 14. Miguel Rocha, *As Pombinhas do Sr. Leitão* (upper panel, page 3)

Image 15. Miguel Rocha, *As Pombinhas do Sr. Leitão* (pages 6-7)

Image 16. Miguel Rocha, *As Pombinhas do Sr. Leitão* (pages 14-15)

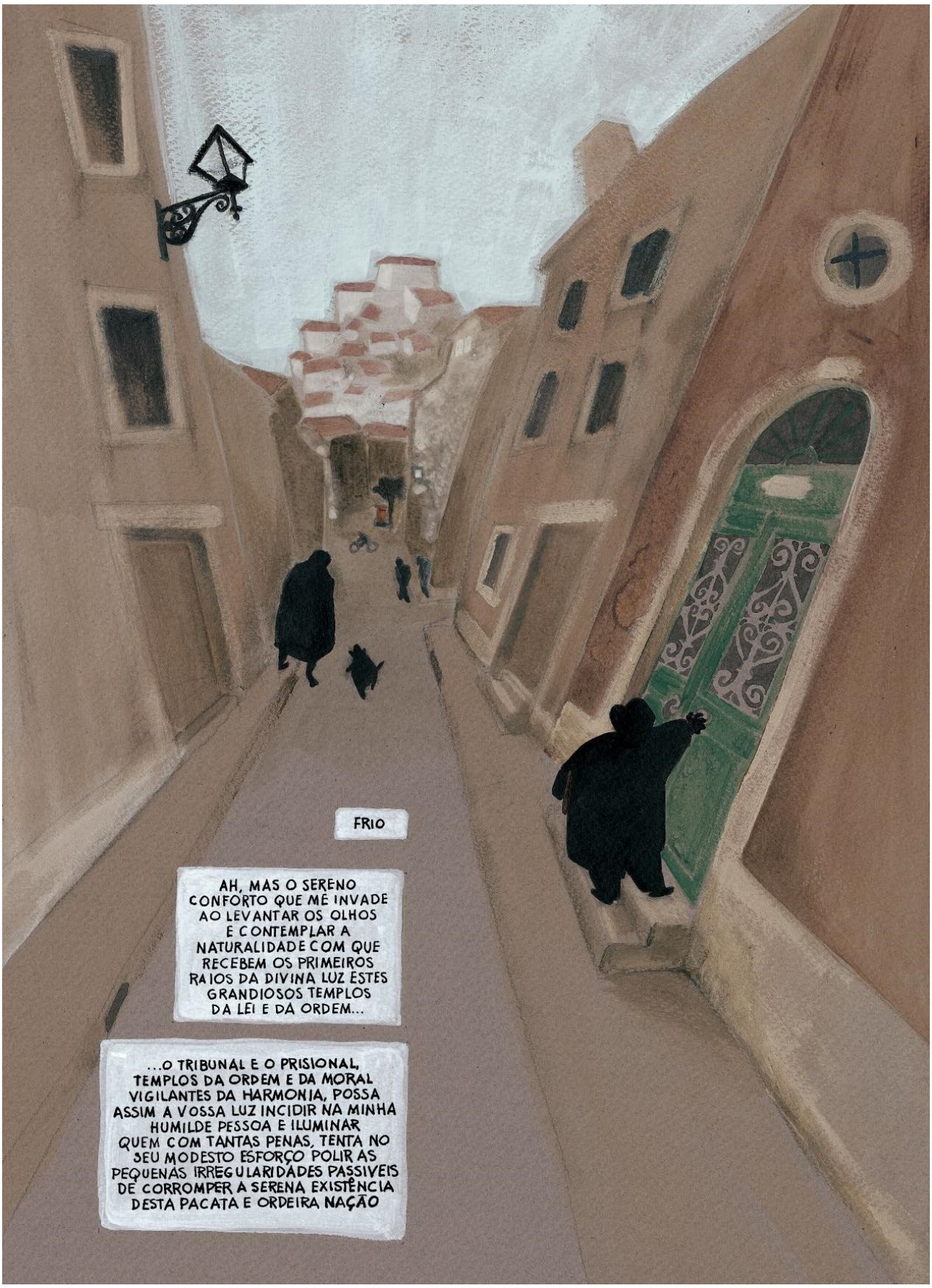

Image 17. Miguel Rocha, *As Pombinhas do Sr. Leitão* (page 2)

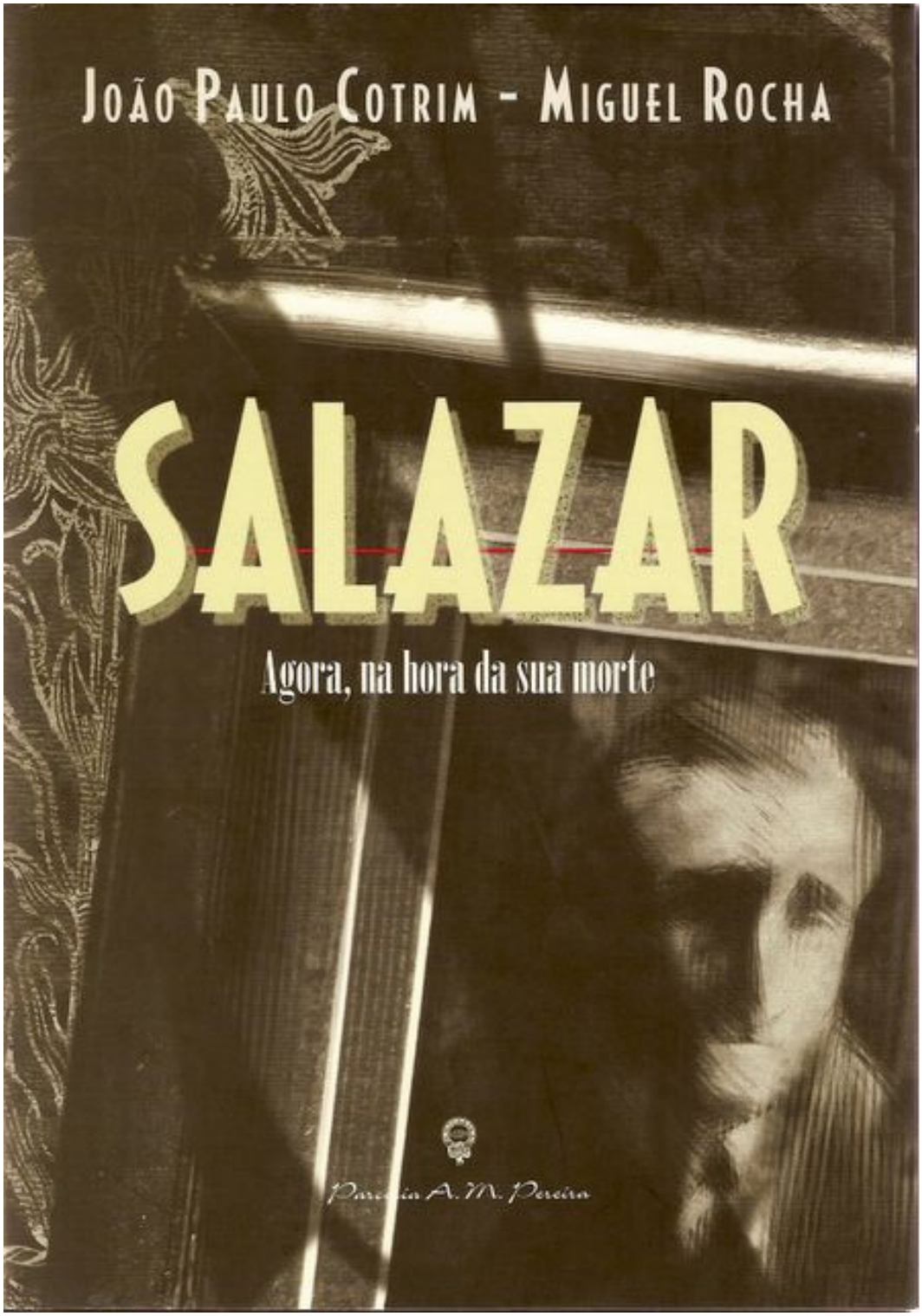

Image 18. João Paulo Cotrim and Miguel Rocha, *Salazar. Agora, na hora da sua morte* (cover, 2006)

Image 19. João Paulo Cotrim and Miguel Rocha,
montage of four separate spreads (the chair motif), *Salazar*

Image 20. João Paulo Cotrim and Miguel Rocha,
montage of two distinct panels (the child Salazar), *Salazar*

Image 21. João Paulo Cotrim and Miguel Rocha, spread (documents collage), *Salazar*

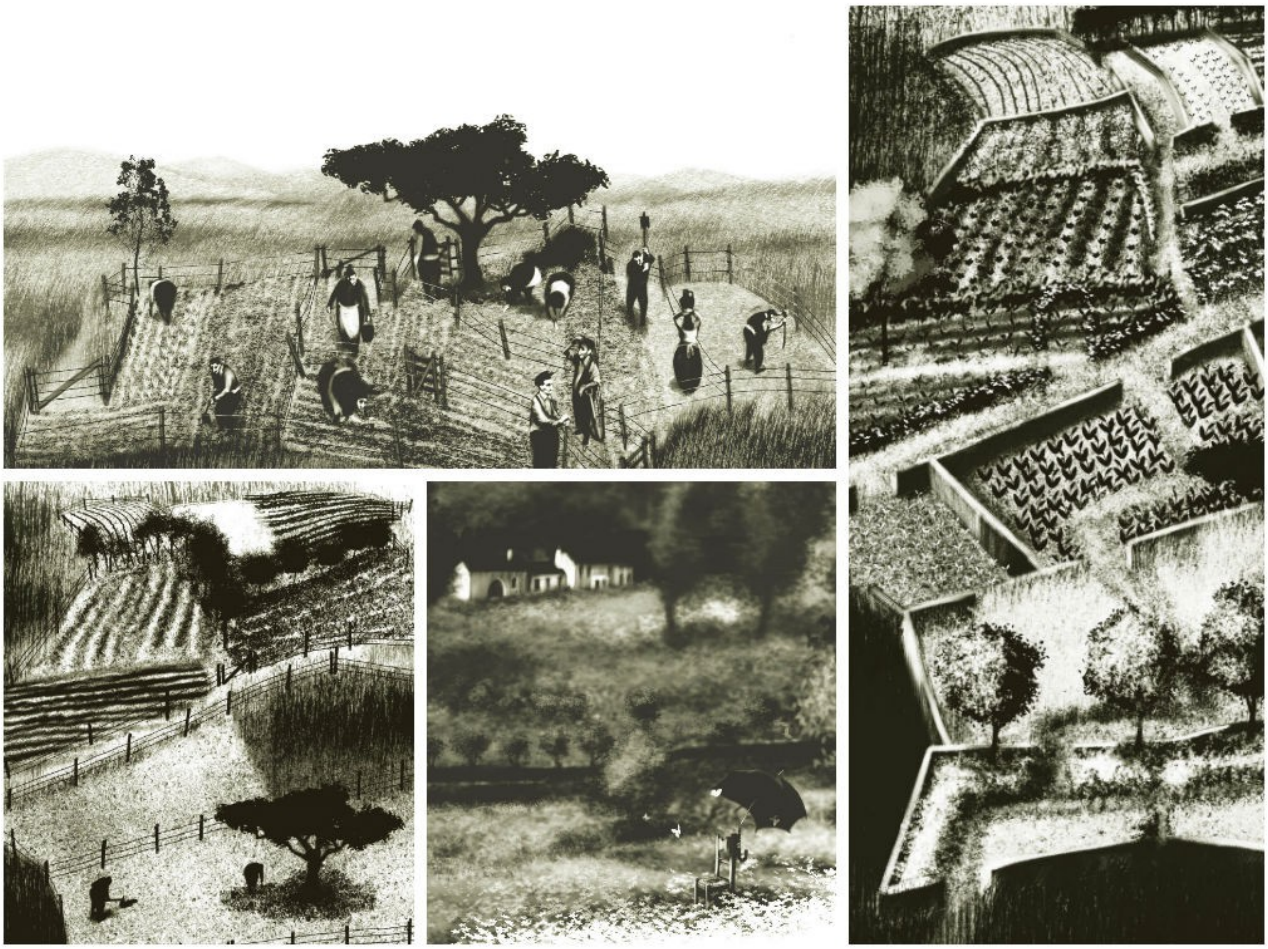

Image 22. João Paulo Cotrim and Miguel Rocha,
montage with several pages (the rural Portugal motif), *Salazar*

Image 23. João Paulo Cotrim and Miguel Rocha, spread (Estado Novo's Lisbon public works), *Salazar*

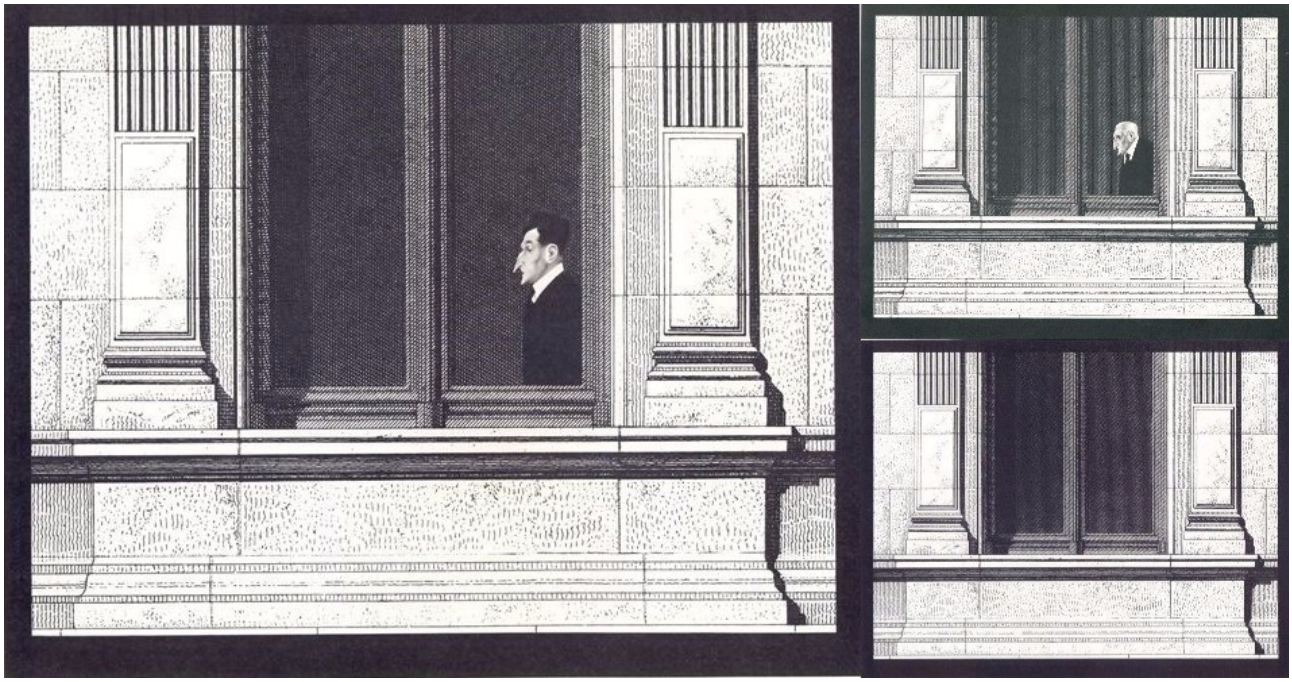

Image 24. João Abel Manta, untitled, *Caricaturas Portuguesas dos Anos de Salazar* (1978)

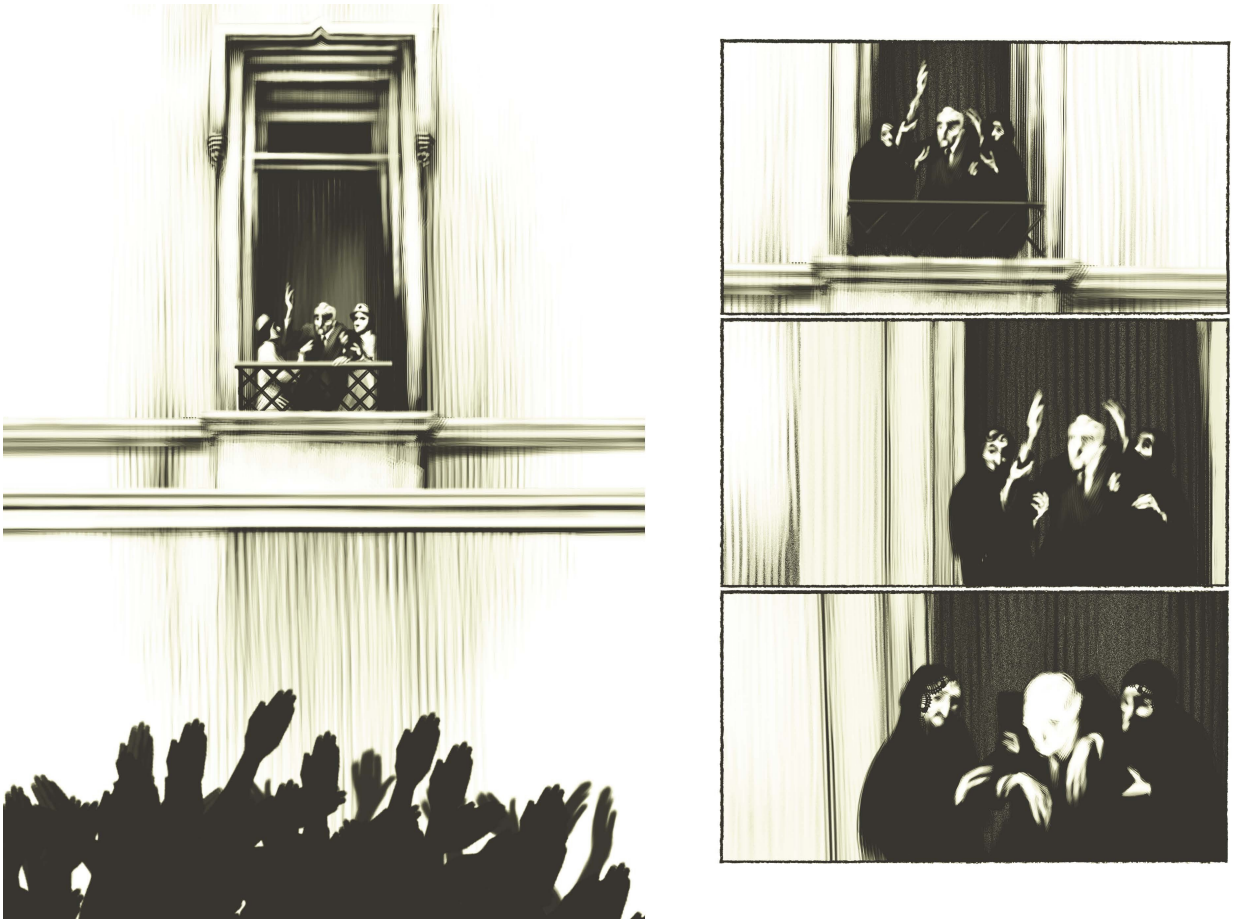

Image 25. João Paulo Cotrim and Miguel Rocha, spread, *Salazar*

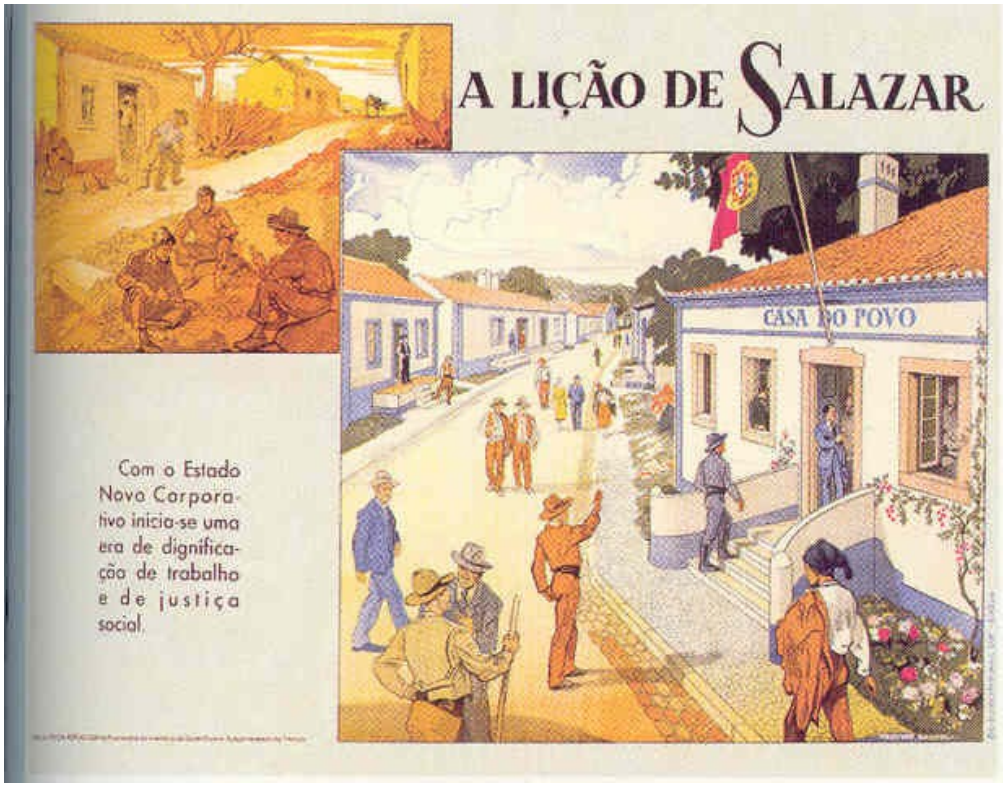

Image 26. One of the seven "A lição de Salazar" lithographs (1938)

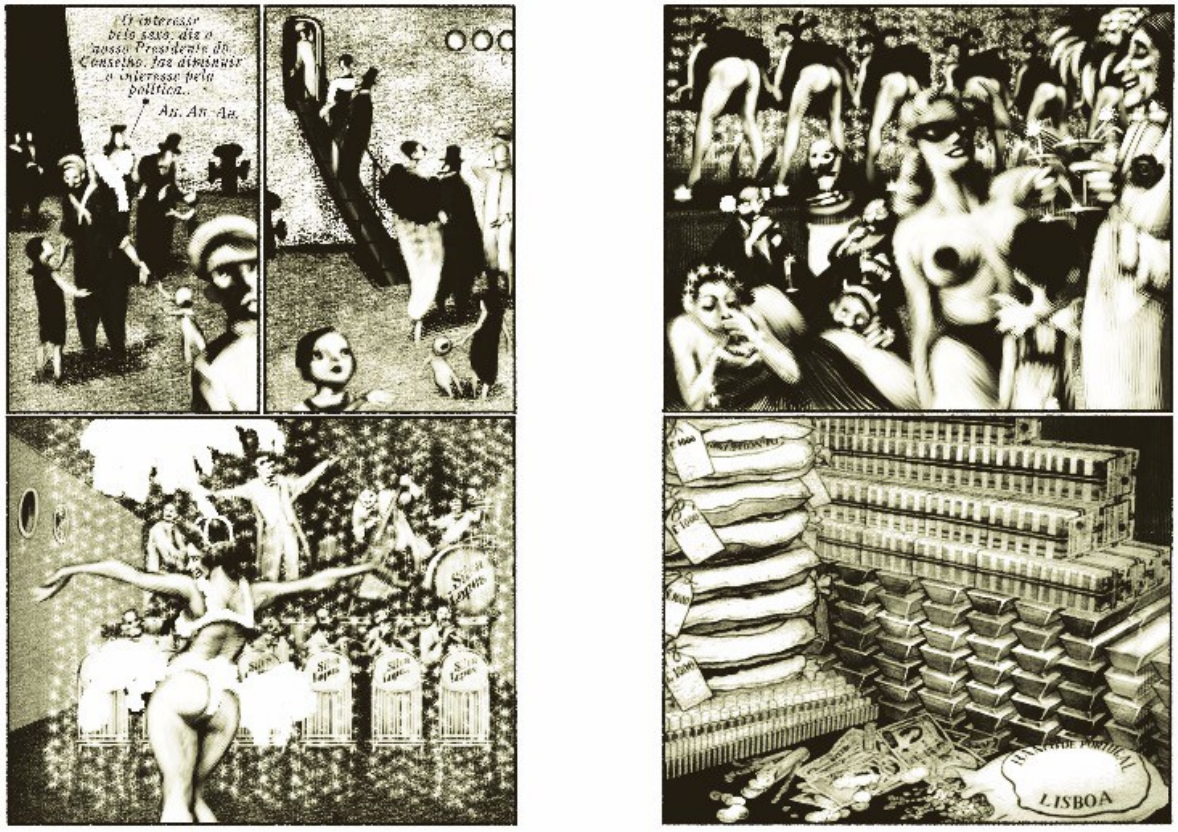

Image 27. Comparison between one the aforementioned lithographs and J. P. Cotrim's and M. Rocha's re-employment in *Salazar*.

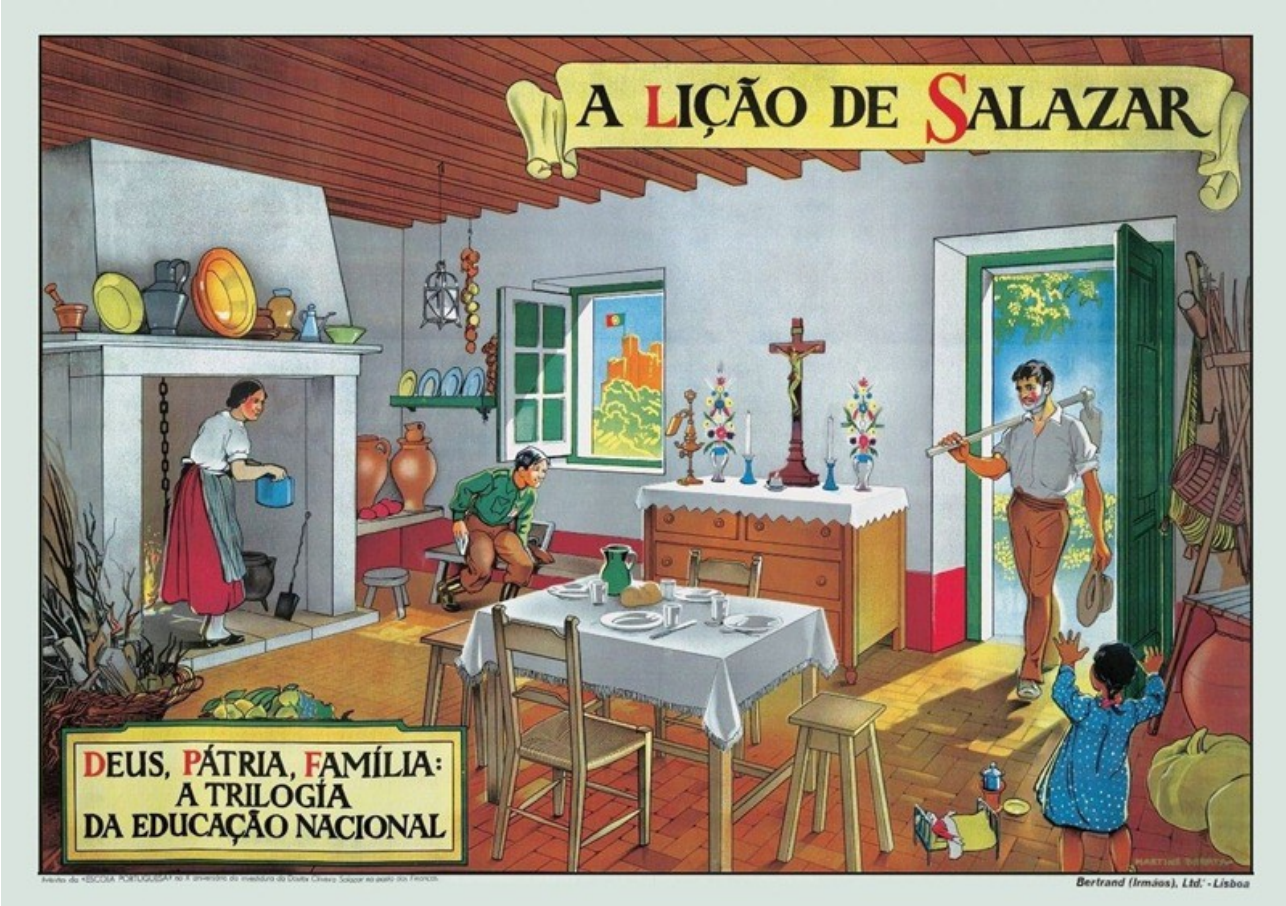

Image 28. Yet another of the seven lithographs "A lição de Salazar"

Image 29. João Paulo Cotrim and Miguel Rocha,
page (reemploying the lithograph shown before), *Salazar*.

Image 30. *Buraco*, issues # 1 through 4 (covers, 2012)

Image 31. Nuno Sousa, "A vida, acima das suas possibilidades", *Buraco* # 1 (2012)

Image 32. Marco Mendes, "Fontinha", originally published in *Buraco* # 4 (2012)

Image 33. Amanda Baeza, *Our Library* (cover and page montage, 2013)

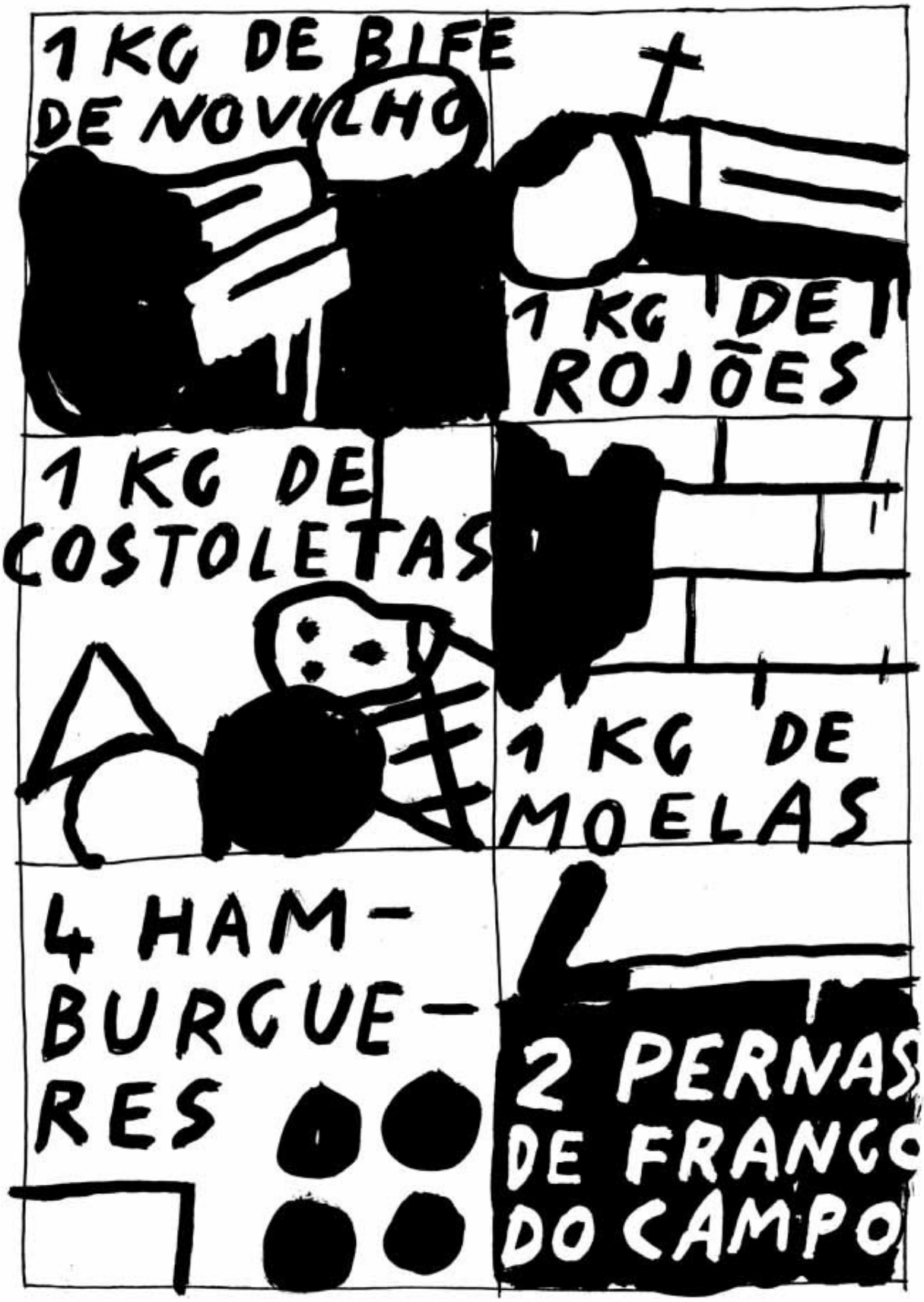

Image 34. Bruno Borges, untitled, *Buraco* # 4 (2012)

Image 35. Pepedelrey, "Recuar!" (two page montage), http://lifeofpepe.blogspot.pt/2014/08/recuar-bd-censuradaproibida.html (2014)

Image 36. Daniel Seabra Lopes, untitled (4 page montage), *Futuro Primitivo* (2012)

Image 37. Miguel Carneiro, "As histórias de merda cheiram mal", *Qu'Inferno* (2009)

Image 38. Joana "Jucifer" Figueiredo, *Post-Shit*
(montage with photos of exhibited work, by P.M.; first edition 2008)

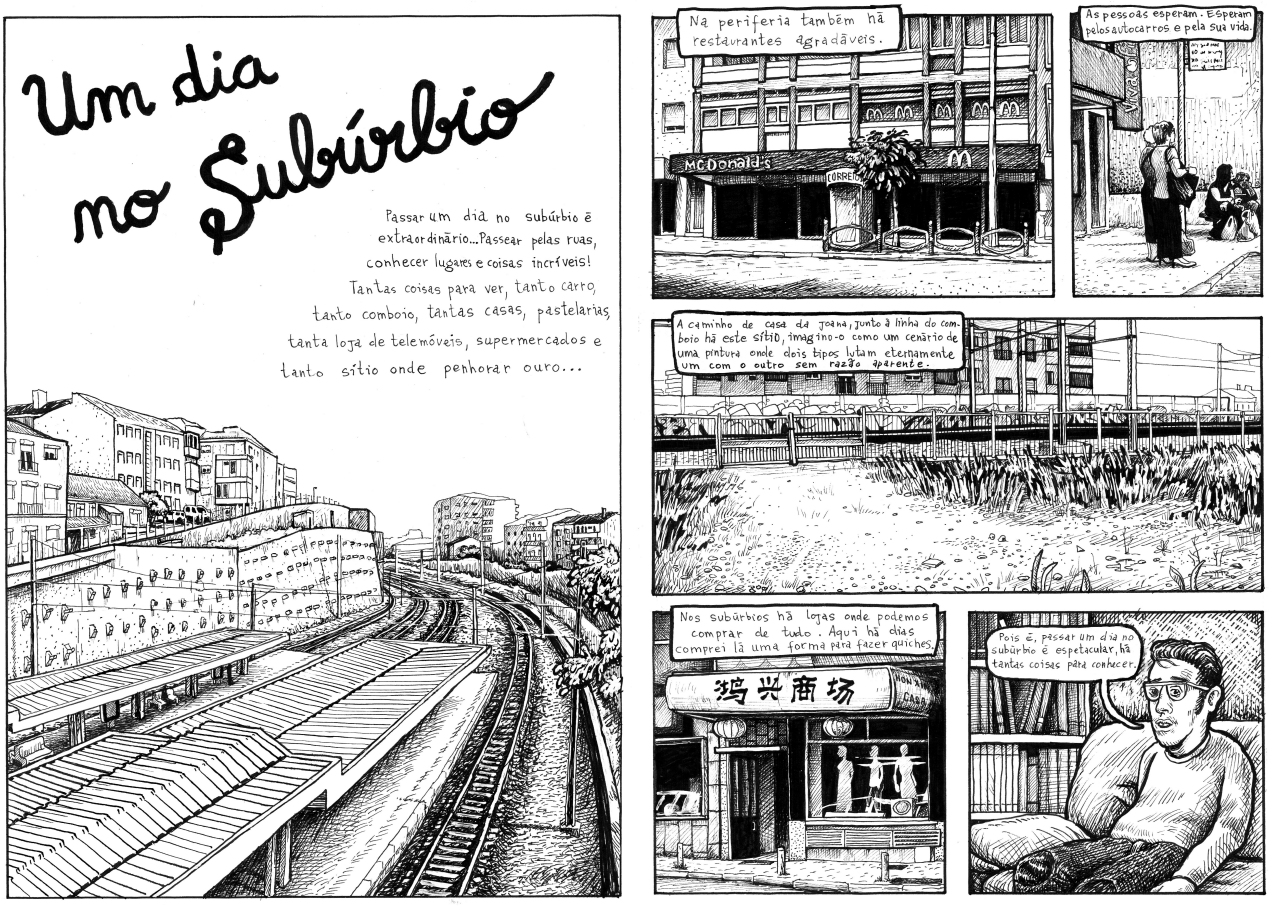

Image 39. Tiago Baptista, "Um dia no subúrbio" (two page montage), *Fábricas, baldios, fé e pedras atiradas à lama* (2011)

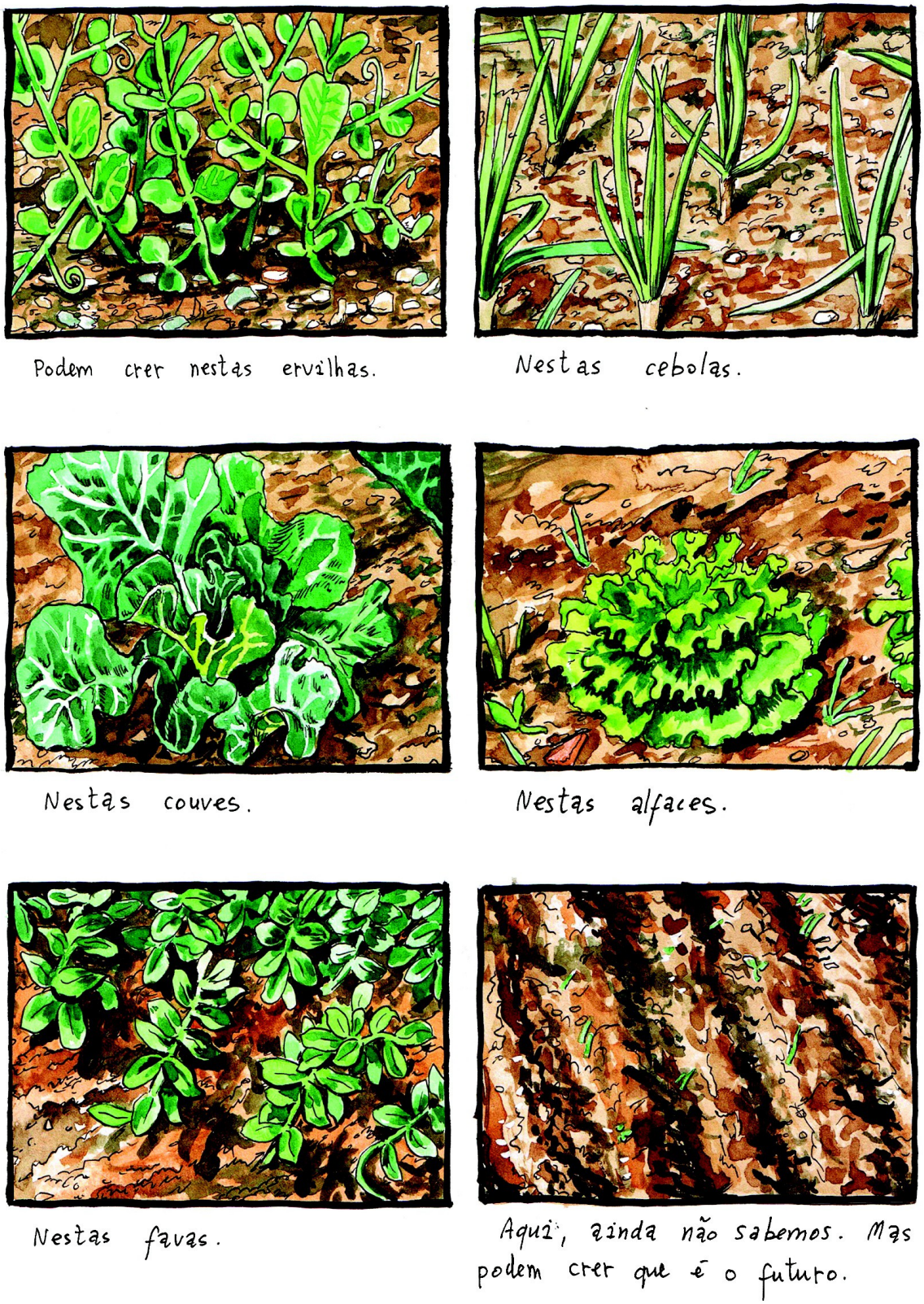

Image 40. Tiago Baptista, "A ribeira de carenque", *Gerador* # 4 (April 2015)

Image 41. A photograph by António Gonçalves Pedro next to the drawing based on it by José Feitor, *Uma perna maior que a outra* (2014)

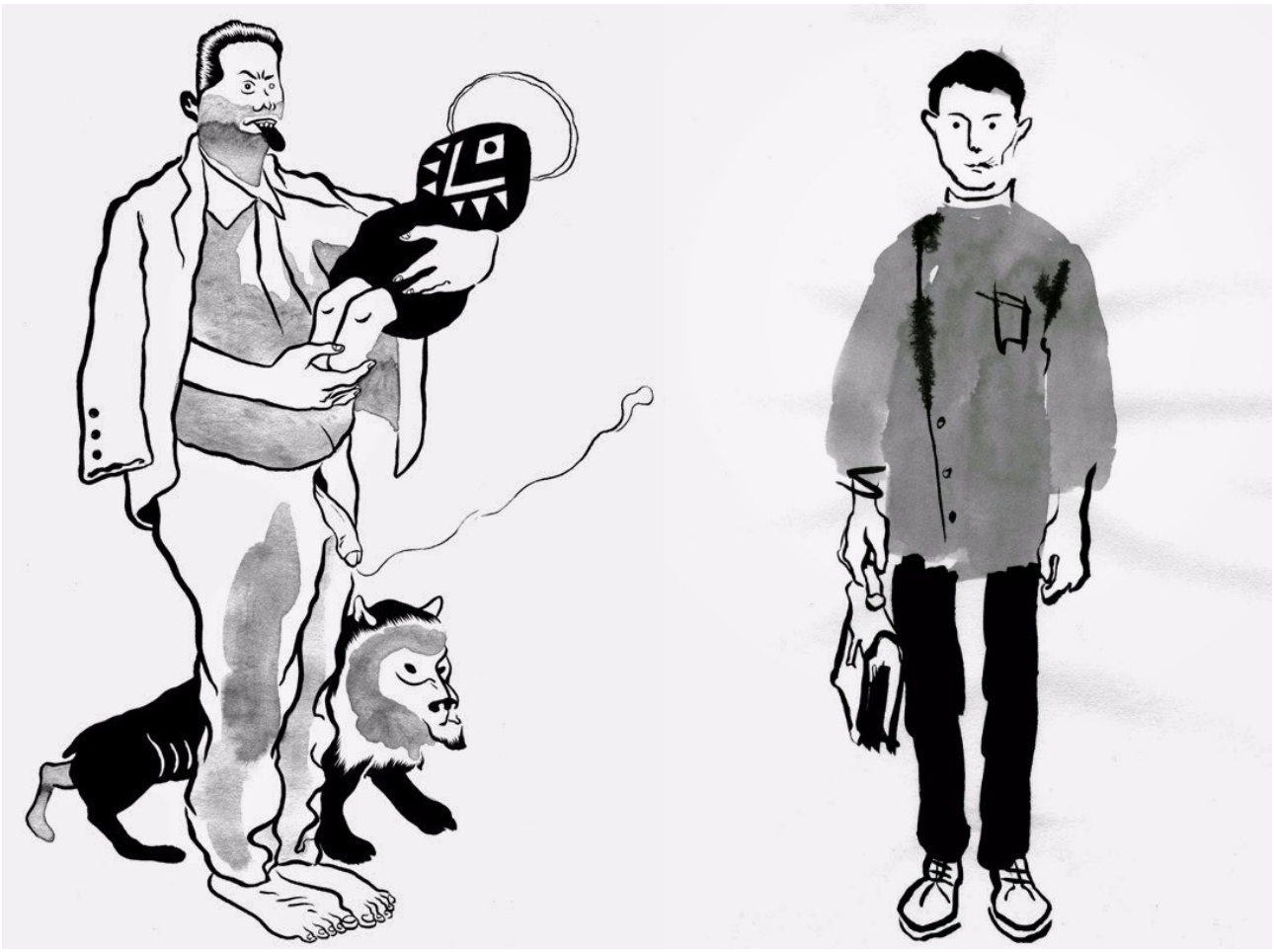

Image 42. José Feitor, *Uma perna maior que a outra* (two drawings montage)

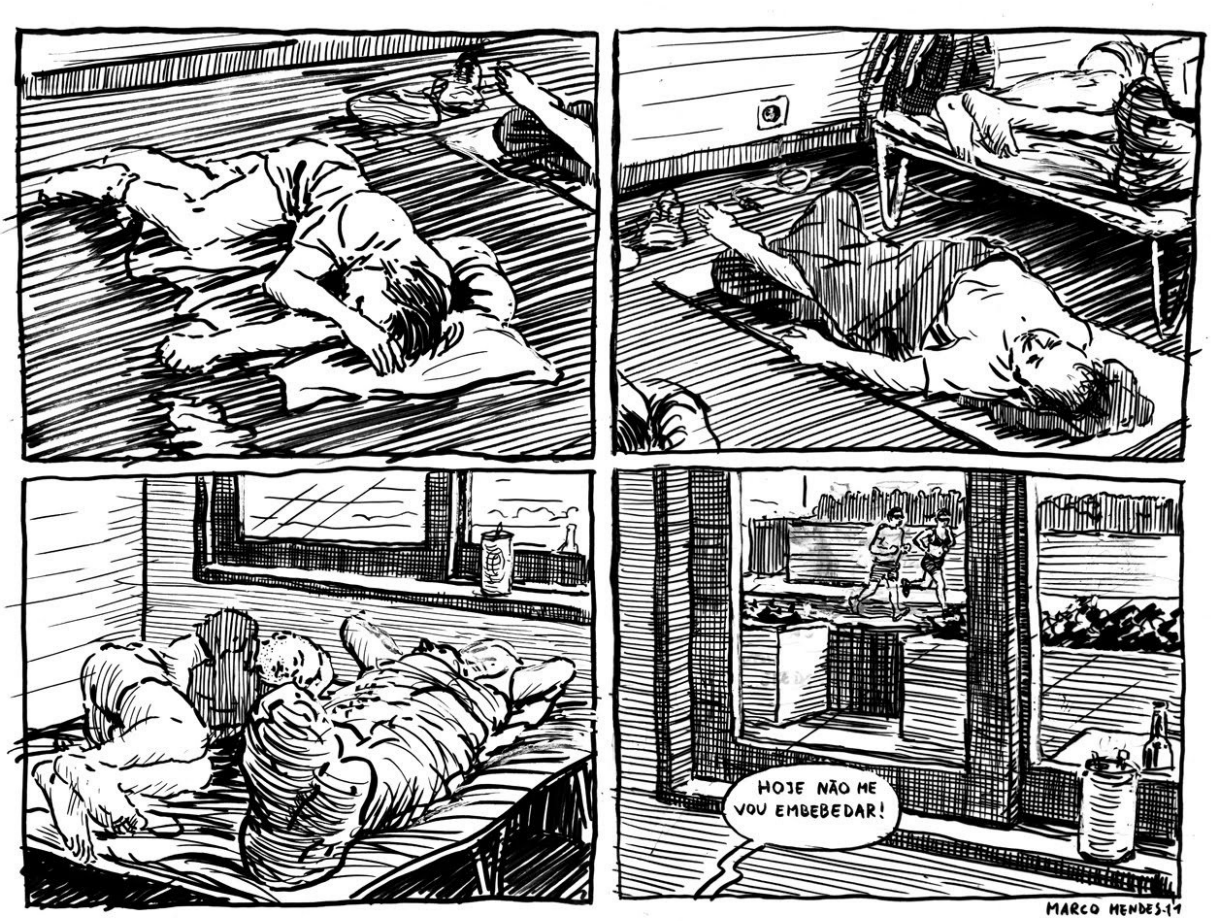

Image 43. Marco Mendes, "Férias", *Diário Rasgado* (2011)